A Tuscan Magdalen

BY

ELEANOR C. DONNELLY

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
PS 1545
Chap. ..... Copyright No. .....
Shelf .D5T8
1895
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A TUSCAN MAGDALEN,

AND OTHER

LEGENDS AND POEMS.

BY

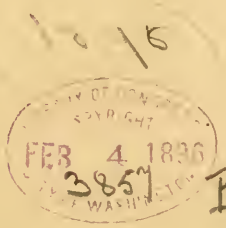
ELEANOR C. DONNELLY,

Author of "Poems," "Children of the Golden Sheaf," "Hymns of the Sacred Heart," "Petronilla and Other Stories," "Our Birthday Bouquet," etc., etc.

PHILADELPHIA:

H. L. KILNER & CO.,

PUBLISHERS.



PS1545
.I5 T8
1895

Copyright, 1896, by
ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.

12-31903

TO
MY SISTERS,
THOSE DEAREST OF ALL DEAR FRIENDS,
THE DEVOTED COMPANIONS OF MY LIFE AND UNFAILING ENLIVENERS OF MY LABORS,
THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
A TUSCAN MAGDALEN	7
THE INSPIRING OF CÆDMON	16
PEDRO VELHO'S WARNING	23
THE MIRACLE OF THE LEPER	33
THE KING AND THE SLAVE	37
ST. CHRISTOPHER'S BURDEN	41
THE TEMPTATION OF LIFFARDUS	44
ST. NICHOLAS AND THE DOVES	50
THE TRUE CHRISTMAS TREE	55
ST. WULSTAN'S CROZIER	56
THE MASTER'S CLOAK	58
FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE	64
THE KEY OF HEAVEN	67
ESTRADA'S SPOUSE	70
THE SHEPHERD'S FEAST	76
THE TEMPTED NUN	81
SIR VERITAS AND THE KING	84
OUR LADY OF THE LAMP	89
THE FRUIT OF OBEDIENCE	91
AN EASTER LESSON	92
AN ARAB'S LOGIC	93
THE STAR OF THE KINGS	96
ST. JOSEPH'S CHARGE	98
AN EASTER LILY	102
A CHAPLET AT COVENTRY	103
THE SINGING LEPER	105
THE BIRTH OF THE HOLLY	107
A MIDSUMMER MEMORY	109
SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR	112
THE THANKSGIVING OF THE CHASTENED	115

PAGE.

CHRISTMAS IDYL 117
THE SPARROW'S SERMON 119
SAN BONIFAZIO 123
THE CHINESE LILY 127
DOING THE WILL OF GOD 129
ST. ANTHONY'S CLIENT 131
THE FIERY TONGUES 132
WHEN, WHERE AND HOW? 133
THE LIFTED HAT 135
FORGIVING AND FORGETTING 137
THE MOTHERLESS HOME 139
A TAPER AT LOURDES 142
THOSE OUTSTRETCHED ARMS 145
THE HERMIT'S VISION 147
CHRIST'S DOVES 149
THE QUEEN AND THE KINGS 151
THE GRAVES OF CHILDREN 153
"AS THE HEN GATHERETH HER CHICKENS" . . . 159
FLOWERS OF THE NIGHT 161
THE DEATH OF THE LILY 163
MORNING-GLORIES 165
A SUNSET SYMBOL 167
THE NEW JERUSALEM 169
ABANDONED 171
A PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER 173
THE BRIDGE OF LIGHT 174
THE WAY OF THE CROSS 175
THE APOSTLE WHO PROVED 177
THE DRAMA SPIRITUALIZED 178
SYMPATHY 185
THE ACADIANS IN PHILADELPHIA 186
ASCENSION DAY 190
THE CHAMBER OF CHRIST 193
SWEET PEACE.—A PICTURE 196
THE CHANGES OF THE YEARS 198
GONE! 202

A TUSCAN MAGDALEN.

MARGHERITA DI CORTONA.

"MARGHERITA! Margherita!"
Through the warm and fragrant
noon
Of the flow'ring Tuscan June,
"Margherita! Margherita!"
Came the eerie accents falling,
Of a weird voice calling, calling:
—"From the castle rise and flee!
I am waiting here for thee.
Wouldst thou meet me?
Wouldst thou greet me?
Late, alas! but all too soon,
Ere the rising of the moon,
Margherita! come to me!"

In a robe of trailing silk,
Soft as down and white as milk,

Roses bound about her hair,
Jewels on her bosom bare,
(From the spacious castle-hall)
Lo! a woman tall and fair
Answered to the airy call,
Tripping down the marble stair
To the leafy garden-wall,
Where a fountain flash'd and fell,
Tinkling like a silvern bell.

"Margherita! Margherita!"
(Once again the voice came sighing,)
"I am waiting, Margherita!"
(Like a lost soul wailing, crying,)
"Margherita! come to me!"
—Right and left the woman gazed,
Put her white hand to her brow;
Looked about her, all amazed,
Shudder'd, turn'd as pale as snow.
Not a creature could she see
In the baffling mystery
Of the sunny silence round;

Only to her slipper'd feet,
Rustling thro' the grasses sweet,
Came her absent lover's hound.

"Faithful dog!" she, stooping, said,
(Jewelled hand upon his head,)
"Bringest thou good news to me?
Doth thy master follow thee?"

Drops of blood upon his fur.
Pitiful he looked at her:
Whining, trembling, crouching down,
Pulled the fringes of her gown,
Grovel'd like a smitten cur—
As to say with gesture dumb,
"Lady, if thou wilt but come,
I will lead thee to my master."
—Throbbed her pulses fast and faster,
Cheek and brow were white as death;
White as sculptur'd alabaster;
Dreading some unknown disaster,
Gasping came her labored breath.

Thro' the gate, still looking back,
Sped the dog; and on his track,
In her beauty, blighted, bent,
Margherita, tott'ring, went.

How the sunlight, blazing, flung
Coals of fire on her head!
Round her brow the roses hung,
In their freshness, wither'd, dead.
Dusty trailed her robes of snow;
Stains of blood began to show
Where her feet (in satin shod)
Up the rocky pathway trod.

Faint, yet fearing still to rest,
From that strange, mysterious quest;
Though her heart burst in her breast,
She must follow, follow, follow;
When the olive groves were near'd,
Sudden paused the dog, distress'd,
And, as sudden, disappear'd
In a little woody hollow;

There, beneath a blasted tree,
Dumb with crushing agony,
Margherita, trembling, found
At her feet the faithful hound,
Turning up the bloody clay
From a crevice in the ground,
Where *a corpse*, disfigured, lay!

Oh! the vision of that face
In its awful putrefaction!
Fetid limbs, devoid of grace,
With the mould'ring silk and lace
Dropping from their foul inaction.
Purple, swollen, worm-defiled,—
(Would the grass the sight might cover!)
On her knees, the woman wild
Glared upon her murthered lover.

Murthered, hurried out of life
In the fulness of his sin:
Hapless breast! th' assassin's knife,
Blood-incrusted, gleamed therein.

And the grinning lips apart,
Seemed to whisper to her heart:
"Look upon me (O Remorse!)
Woman, whom I loved too well,
Thou art gazing on the corse
Of a soul whose home is hell!
In thy beauty and thy bloom,
Thou hast helped to seal my doom;
Hear me, I am calling thee,
Margherita! come to me!"

"Ah! reproach me as thou wilt,
Partner of my shame and guilt!"
Cried the woman, shrinking back
From the ghastly sight before her.
(Wretched victim!—on the rack
Mem'ry's furies scourged and tore her):
"Vent thy scorn upon my head,
Do whate'er thou wilt to me,
But oh! call me not to thee,
Call, oh! call me not to be
Fetter'd to thy fiery bed
Through the long Eternity!

"See!"—and with her trembling hands
From her throat, she tore the gems,
Wrench'd the roses' wither'd stems
From her long hair's shining strands:
"See, great God! I here lament
All my wanton days of crime;
Judge me not before my time!
I repent—repent—repent!"
(Thro' the woods the echoes went:
"*I repent—repent—repent!*")

"Lo! beside this fest'ring clay,
(Broken idol of my sin!)
If thy pardon I may win,
Silks and gems I cast away,
And a nobler life begin.
Hear and help me, Love Divine!
By Thy Blood and by Thy tears,
Wash me from the guilt of years,
Make my heart forever Thine!"

On her head, the dews were falling,
(Angel-tears of Paradise

Falling thro' the night of June!)
—Rose on high the rounded moon,
Like a silvery balloon,
Floating thro' the quiet skies;
But another Voice was calling,
Sweet, a far-off Voice was calling
From the pure empyrean skies:
"Margherita! Margherita!
Listen to thy Lover true,
(Ever ancient, ever new,)
Who hath bled and died for thee
On the fatal Calvary-Tree.

"He hath loved thee, Margherita
With an everlasting love,
In the mighty strength whereof,
(Being merciful to thee)
He hath drawn thee, Margherita,
From thy life of misery!

"—Scandal of thine Alviano!
Shame of Montepulciano!

Thou shalt be renowned in story
For thy wondrous purity;
Thou shalt be Cortona's glory,
Pearl of grateful Tuscany!——
I have claimed thee,
I have named thee,—
Rise, repent, and follow Me!"

* * * * *

Ere the night had settled down
Over Montepulciano,
Thro' the gates of that old town,
Winding forth to Alviano,
Went a woman clad in brown,
Ashes on her shrouded head,
Sobbing (whilst the child she led
Clung, affrighted, to her gown):
"Farewell, home of sinful leisure,
Farewell, scenes of guilty pleasure,
Ye have fled mine eyes at last!
Welcome, life of blesséd losses!
Welcome, penance! Welcome, crosses!
—O my God! forgive the past!"

THE INSPIRING OF CÆDMON.

I.

IN the Abbey of Whitby vast and quaint,
Ruled by Hilda, Abbess and saint,
(Whose blood ran pure from the royal spring
Of her great-grandsire, Edwin the King),
Hundreds of learned nuns and friars
In separate cloisters kept the rules,
Toiled in the cells and sang in the choirs,
Studied and taught in the ancient schools;
Gentle and simple, all in their way,
Owning the Abbess Hilda's sway.

II.

Down in the servants' hall outside,
Where the great logs blazed in the hearth-place wide,
Many a poor retainer shared
The Minster's bounty; and, tender, cared

For the sick and the sore, who thronged the grate
Of the Abbess Hilda's convent-gate.
Many a rude, unletter'd serf
Swung the scythe o'er the abbey-turf,
Or ploughed its fields; or the horses led
To the crystal brooks; or the poultry fed;
Or guided the kine and the browsing sheep
Through the clover-pastures, lush and deep;—
Harmless louts, of as little lore
As the beasts they fed at the stable-door.

III.

Dullest of all the dull souls there,
Who knew no secrets of book or prayer,
Who sang no song, and who spake no word,
Was Cædmon, the humble cattle-herd.
Cædmon, the homely, honest clown
Whose gray locks hung o'er his temples brown;
Whose stolid visage and sunken eyes
From the mists of the moorlands seemed to rise,
Like those of a phantom, gaunt and high,
Tracking the herds 'neath the autumn sky.

IV.

Though many a rural minstrel woke
The harp, at night, in the halls of oak,—
Ne'er had the herdsman's hand been known
To rouse sweet Music's slumbering tone.
Whenever his comrades sat at board,
And the meats were passed or the malt was pour'd,
If the song, in its turn, to Cædmon came,
(Half in sorrow and half in shame),
He rose from his seat in silent mood,
And toss'd the harp to the nearest bard,
Then, wending his way to an out-house rude,
Where the kine were stalled in the stable-yard,
In cold and darkness cowered alone,
Couch'd with the beasts on the floor of stone,
Murmuring ever the same sad thing:
"If I could but sing! If I could but sing!"

V.

There, on the straw, on one such night,
With a heavy heart, but a conscience light,
He cast him down (when his prayers were said,)

Where the dumb brutes slumber'd left and right,
And, watching the stars through the chinks o'er-
head,
Fell fast asleep on his fragrant bed.

VI.

The moon rose up in the quiet West,
With a fleecy veil round her virgin breast;
The night-wind sighed through the broken walls,
The cattle stirred in their blacken'd stalls,
And, over beyond, in the convent choir,
Sounded the voice of a chanting friar.
But Cædmon lay with a smile on his face,
Nor heard nor saw these sounds or sights;
He only marveled to see the place
Filled with splendor and strange delights!

VII.

Over him floated a golden cloud,
Rare as the mists of that last bright hour,
When the rainbow-tints of the sunset crowd
The western skies with their gorgeous dower;

And out of the cloud, an angel came,
With flower-like face and wings of flame,
Who cried in a voice, both sweet and strong:
"Cædmon! sing me a blessed song!"

VIII.

"Alas!" groaned the herdsman, hoarse and low,
"I *cannot* sing! If thou didst but know,
'Twas because of the harp and the song, fair sprite,
I fled from the feast, this very night!"
"Yet, nevertheless," the angel said,
"A singer thou 'lt be!"—And with bended head,
Cædmon questioned: "What shall I sing?"
The spirit answered: "The praise of the King!"
Answered: "*Thy* theme shall CREATION be,—
Sing thou of Time and Eternity!"

IX.

And Cædmon lifted his voice and sang—
(His thrilling tones to the rafters rang)—
Verses in praise of the God Triune,
Father, Creator of sun and moon,

Of earth, and of all the things thereof
That speak His wisdom, His might, His love!
The stars in the sky, the winds that blow,
The rain and the dew, the frost and the snow,
The birds in the air, the fish in the sea,
The beasts that roam over hill and lea,
The flowers, the trees, and the silver streams,
The lakes land-lock'd in their crystal dreams,
All, all the beautiful things of earth
In the pristine glow of their sinless birth,
Swelled through the strains of Cædmon's song,
A *Benedicite*, grand and strong!

X.

"Praise God, ye creatures!" the herdsman cried;
"Praise God!" the Angel soft replied;
And the musical echoes swept abroad
Their mighty chorus: "Praise God! praise God!"

XI.

Lo! in the morning, gaunt and thin,
The Abbess Hilda led him in

To the learned men; and bade him there
Sing the song he had learned in prayer,
The song of his dream, the psalm of might,
The Angel taught him in the night.
And when, from his grand, enlightened soul,
The strains majestic 'gan to roll,
When, from his bearded lips gushed out
A pæan glad as a seraph's shout,
And all his dull, dark, stolid face
Transfigured grew, with light and grace,—
The Abbess spake: "Our God in heaven
Hath wondrous gifts to the guileless given!
Henceforth, O friars, *this* man shall be
The least of your gracious company!"
And then she added, with 'bated breath:
"Pure in thy life– pure in thy death,
O poet Cædmon! O bard sublime!
In soul and song to the saints allied,
The world shall hail thee throughout all time,
As Whitby's glory and Whitby's pride!"

PEDRO VELHO'S WARNING.

I.

WHERE the blue waves, sparkling, ran
Up the beach at old San Tchan,*
And in foaming eddies went,
Circling in and out again,
In a little Chinese tent
On the sands beside the main,
In a little Chinese tent,
With a friend from sunny Spain,
Pedro Velho sat at play,
On a long-gone Summer's day.

Gay and guileless cavalier,
Gallant Velho was most dear
To that Spanish saint, whose fame
Even then the Indies filled;
And if Francis Xavier's name
Many a colder bosom thrilled,

* Sancian.

It awoke a rapture blest
In the ardent Pedro's breast.

So it chanced that, as he sat
In his plumed and drooping hat,
With the jewels of his sword
Glowing 'neath his silken cloak,—
(While his friend, across the board,
In the soft Castilian spoke,)—
Pedro lifted up his eyes
With a start of glad surprise.

For the curtains of the tent
By a master-hand were rent,
And before them, grave and sweet,
Stood th' Apostle of San Tchan!
—Pedro, springing to his feet,
Knelt before the holy man,
And, in reverential tone,
Humbly craved a benison.

Softly Xavier spake and smiled:
"God requite thee, dearest child,

For thy gracious charity!
Yesternoon, beside the sea,
When I asked of thee a dole
For a tried and tempted soul,
Thou didst answer, 'With this key,
Lo! I give to thee control
Of my coffers; go, and take
What thou wilt for Christ's dear sake!'"

"But, my Father," Pedro said,
Lifting up his handsome head,
"Was it right or just to scorn
The poor gift I tendered thee?
Half my riches I had sworn
Should be thine—but lo! instead,
When I chanced, this very morn,
To inspect my treasury,
(God forgive Your Reverence!)
Not a coin was missing thence!"

Then St. Francis' face grew bright
With a strange, prophetic light:

"See!" he murmured, "O my son!
O my brave, unselfish one!
See how wond'rously the Lord,
Far from lessening thy hoard,
Or diminishing thy store —
For each deed of mercy done
Doth increase it more and more!

"Ah! thy gold shall never fail,
Nor distress thy doors assail;
For 'twill chance, as I foresee,
(Blessed meed of charity!)
That thy little cares and woes
Shall dissolve in peace divine;
And when life is near its close,
There shall come to thee a sign
Of that awful, final hour
Which precedes the soul's repose;
— *When the sweetness of the wine*
In thy mouth, alone, shall sour,
Then, I say to thee, my friend,
MAKE THOU READY FOR THE END!"

* * * * * *

II.

At a banquet at Yenchow,
With a calm, unwrinkled brow,
With a face still fresh and fair,—
(Spite of many a silver thread
In the mass of ebon hair
Clust'ring round his noble head),—
Pedro Velho, 'mid the rest,
Sate a staid and honored guest.

Stately speech and sparkling song
Swept the polish'd board along,
While it groaned beneath the load
Of the luscious fruits thereon ;
Rarest liquors foamed and flowed,
Or in glitt'ring goblets shone,—
As applauding knight and dame
Drank to Pedro Velho's name.

To his feet with grave repose
Pedro graciously arose,

And with courtesy profound
Touched the goblet to his lips,
Touched, and took it from his lips,
Then, affrighted, gazed around!
—From his hand the beaker slips,
Crush'd in atoms on the ground!
For the sweet wine of the South
Is as acid in his mouth!

Like a whisper, fine and clear,
Long-forgotten, floating near,
Till his blood within him froze
And his tears ran down like brine,
Pedro Velho seemed to hear
In the porches of his ear:
"And when life is near its close,
There shall come to thee a sign
Of that awful, final hour
Which precedes the soul's repose;
—*When the sweetness of the wine*
In thy mouth, alone, shall sour,
Then, I say to thee, my friend,
MAKE THOU READY FOR THE END!"

Right and left, he turned and bowed
To the silent, wondering crowd,
  And a light shone thro' his face,
Like a sunrise thro' a cloud;
And as one who looks his last
  'Round an old familiar place—
(Tender-eyed and dreamy-brow'd,
  Doomed to linger but a space)—
With his cloak about him cast,
Through the open door he pass'd,
And along the starlit street
Sped with swift, unsandall'd feet.

Soft! a chapel by the road
Whence an altar-lamp outglowed,
  And the portal standing wide
Wooed the weary wanderer in!
  "O my Master!" Pedro cried,
(Looking strangely gaunt and thin),
"In this spot Thou dost abide,
Far from worldly pomp and pride;

And to-night, alone herein,
While the earth is all asleep,
(Shaking off the dust of sin),
I shall wake and I shall weep,
And my last, long vigil keep!"

At the altar rail alone,
On the marble pavement prone,
Pedro cast himself—and prayed,
As the dying only pray.
Soft the lamp shone through the shade,
Wore the silent hours away,
Till the stars began to fade
In the rosy light of day;
And a friar, entering, found
The lone watcher on the ground.

But he rose, and calmly said,
(Folded hands and bended head),
"Shrive me, Father, from my sins,
For my soul abhorreth them;
And when once the Mass begins,
Let it be a *Requiem;*

And the server, let him bring,
Let him spread the funeral-pall;
Clouds of incense o'er me fling,
Drops of blessed rain let fall;
While recumbent, on this bier,
I shall lie and listen here."

Swift they placed the couch of death,
Draped the inky pall, beneath
Whose black folds, a sombre cloud,
Pedro Velho laid him down,
Wholly hidden in *that* shroud,
As in friar's cowl and gown.
And the altar-tapers flung
Tender light on book and bell,
And, below, the censer swung,
And the blessed raindrops fell,
As the solemn Mass was said
For the dear, departed Dead.

But when soft upon the air
Rose the last celestial prayer,

And the acolyte's response
  Echoed, like an angel's song,—
In the central aisle, at once,
  Gathered then an anxious throng;
And a chill crept over all,
  Every cheek grew ashen-gray,
As the priest withdrew the pall
  From the bier where Pedro lay!

Lo! a lustre, pure and faint,
  Like the nimbus of a saint!
Lo! a delicate perfume
  As of lilies!—and behold!
Like a statue on a tomb,
  Sculptured white, and still, and cold,
Like a marble effigy
  Of a knight in dreamless rest,
With his sword across his knee,
  And his hands upon his breast;
Full of Christian purity,
  Full of peace, supernal, blest,—
In the midst (O vision dread!)
  Lay the noble Velho,—*dead!*

THE MIRACLE OF THE LEPER.

A Legend of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

BACK from the chase return'd (his knightly suite
Lagging behind from weariness and heat,
And in their sturdy silence, as they came,
Bending beneath the weight of hard-won game),
Dust on his doublet, languor in his tread,
The velvet cap doff'd from his noble head,
Duke Louis crossed the threshold, first of all,
And met his mother in the outer hall.

A stately Duchess, dark and scornful-eyed,
She caught his hand, and hurried him aside.
And, with an angry lip and lowering brow,
"Listen!" she cried; "I've that to tell thee now,
I've that to show to thee, which shall arouse
Thy just and lawful ire against thy spouse;
For thine Elizabeth this day hath done
A deed which doth disgrace us both, my son!"

Worn as he was, and wearied nigh to death,
And loving, as he did, Elizabeth,
Duke Louis, while his fair cheek scarlet burn'd,
Scorning her words, withdrew his hand, and turn'd
As though to go; but she, too, flushing red,
"Dost doubt the tale? Then come with me," she said;
"Come" (with a bitter smile), "and thou shalt see
The one thy wife loves better far than thee."

So, by the hand, his tardy steps she led
Unto his room, unto his nuptial bed;
And, pausing, whispered to the startled Duke:
"Now, look, my son! by thy fair knighthood, look!
Whilst thou wert at the chase, thy childish bride,
(Whose saintly whims and lack of proper pride
Make her at once the scandal and the sport
Of all the lords and ladies of the court),
Whilst thou wert gone, I say, she and her maid
Hugo, the leper, to this room conveyed,

Cleansed his foul sores, his loathsome palate fed,
Anointed him, *and laid him on thy bed!*
Aha! thou frownest! Dost thou doubt me now?"
The Duke was flush'd with shame from throat to brow.
Saint as he was, (for only Heaven knew
How pure his knightly soul, his faults how few),
And dearly as he loved his little wife
For her sweet charities and stainless life,
Yet did *this* deed of mercy she had done,
Seem to him then a most imprudent one.

'Twas not in knighthood to repress the ire
Which knit his brow and lit his eye with fire,
As stepping back, by angry impulse led,
He quickly raised the curtains of the bed.

O Love divine! the sight which there he view'd
His flashing eyes with tenderest tears subdued;
His cheek grew white, his heart, tumultuous, throbb'd,
And his proud mother hid her face and sobb'd.

No wretched Hugo slumbered, hideous, there,
No leper, foul with sores and matted hair—
But, mild and meek, with fair arms open'd wide,
And dim eyes lifted—JESUS CRUCIFIED
Upon the silken couch, discovered, lay,
The fresh blood dropping from His wounds away!
—"O spouse!" the young Duke said, (for at his
side
His wife was standing),—"O my saintly bride!
Oft to such guests, I pray thee, yield my bed,
And may our Lord rain blessings on thy head"!

Then, while his Duchess-mother stood dismay'd,
Down on his knees Duke Louis fell and prayed:
"O Lord, my God, whom earth and heaven praise,
Be merciful to one unfit to gaze
Upon the awful secrets of thy power
Made manifest in this tremendous hour!
Gracious, and good, and loving as Thou art,
Make me a man according to Thy heart;
And in her life, O Lord! and in her death,
Bless Thou my spouse, my sweet Elizabeth"!

THE KING AND THE SLAVE.

I.

'TIS told somewhere in an Eastern story,
The tale of a king,
Who once, in the prime of his pomp and glory,
Did a strange thing.

A thing so mad in its melancholy,
That many a sheik
Laughs as he tells his sons the folly
Of King Bal-zeek.

He called, one day, from his myriad minions,
A wretch of a slave,
And, in spite of the court's and the queen's opinions,
To him he gave

Complete control of the royal realm,
An absolute power
To rule, as a king, at the nation's helm,—
For one brief hour.

The crown, the robe, and the regal tunic
Were put upon him,
And the king himself, as the veriest eunuch,
Attended on him.

And silvery sweet from mosque and tower
The chimes did ring,—
The king was slave for one short hour,
The slave was king!

II.

But how did the crowned and jeweled actor
His liege repay?—
Lo! with his heel on his benefactor,
He cried: "*To-day*,

"*I, as a monarch, deal destruction*
To this vile thing!

Seize on him, slaves!"—and without compunction,
They slew the king!

III.

Deep in the sea of the allegory
Lies the coral;
Deep in the heart of this Eastern story
Lies a moral.

Slaves are we, by a gracious Sovereign
Called from naught,
Not for an hour alone to govern
A world of thought,

But crowned for a lifetime, crowned and sceptred,
To rule (vast scheme!)
O'er the world and the flesh and the subtle tempter,
In power supreme.

With the precious oil of a sacred chrism
Our Liege anointed
The regal garb of a blest baptism
To us appointed;

And leaving the heavenly court and castle,
The King who saves
Hath made Himself the humblest vassal
Of us poor slaves.

IV.

And what return have we made *our* Master?
Have heart and blood
Beat 'neath our borrowed robes the faster
With gratitude?

Alas! alack! O base dishonor!
O outraged Throne!
We have set our heel on the royal Donor
Of all we own!

We have cried aloud to our passions: "Seize
Him!
And Sin shall reign!"—
Weep, till our tears of blood appease Him,
Our King is slain!

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S BURDEN.

OVER the river, black with night,
And swollen with torrent and waterfall,
The giant, Offero, man of might,
Carried a Child, both fair and small.

Light as a feather, the Baby hung
By His slender hands, from the shoulders strong;
It seemed, in truth, that a spirit clung
To the monster's neck, as he ploughed along.

But lo! as the waters, rising, pour'd
Their misty spray on that brawny breast,—
In the deepest part of the darksome ford,
The Boy on his bearer firmer press'd.

And little by little, the weight increas'd
Till the great feet faltered in their track;
A mountain of lead, at the very least,
Seemed bending and crushing the stalwart back!

"'Tis the weight of the world!"—he groaned in fear;
But a sweet Voice murmur'd: "Be not afraid!"
Not the weight of the world thou carriest here,
But HIM by whose power the world was made!"

"Who art Thou, Child?"—(as the sweatdrops sprang
From his corded temples)—the giant roared;
And clear, thro' the night, the answer rang,
Like a silver trump—"I am Christ the Lord!"

"And since thou hast borne Me from shore to shore.
And thy rest and thy comfort sacrific'd;—
Behold! thou art *Offero*, now, no more,
But brave *Christofero*—bearer of Christ!"

* * * * *

Sweet legend! cheering the weary soul,
As it fords the stream of a fate ill-starr'd;

When the floods in their fury, fiercest, roll,
And the burden of Duty presses hard:
No need to envy the blesséd load
The saint thro' the raging waters bore;
For, bearing a burden imposed by God,
We are all St. Christophers, brave and broad,
Carrying Christ to the heavenly shore!

THE TEMPTATION OF LIFFARDUS.

I.

DEAR a little silent swamp,
Lying low and dark and damp
In the shadow of an abbey,
(Famed in annals mystical),
Of an old Cistercian abbey,
Far away in ancient Gaul,
In a hut among the kine
Monk Liffardus kept the swine.

II.

Dreary moss upon the gables,
Where the pens, the sties, the stables
Filled the atmosphere surrounding
With a foul and noisome scent—
Dust and darkness all around him,
Monk Liffardus was content,
In humility divine,
Tending faithfully the swine.

III.

Gently born and gently bred,
It might seem a portion dread,
In the light of worldly reason,
To endure a yoke like this;
But the ever-changing season
Brought a never-changing bliss
To the hut among the kine,
Where Liffardus kept the swine.

IV.

Never-changing till the day
(In those ages far away),
When the demon in his malice
Came to murmur in his ear:
"Didst forsake thy father's palace
For such works as wait thee here?
Shall a prince, O brother mine,
Stoop to grovel with the swine?"

V.

On his narrow bed, that night,
Full of anguish and affright,

Monk Liffardus lay, temptation
Brewing fever in his brain.
Had this life of abnegation,
After all, been lived in vain?
Gentle birth and breeding fine
Cast, like pearls, before the swine?

VI.

Should he rise and should he flee
From this den of misery?
Rise and flee unto the castle
On his father's fair domains,
Where the merry guests make wassail
And the god of pleasure reigns?
Are not women, song and wine,
Better comrades than the swine?

VII.

Musing thus upon his bed,
Lo! a sudden light was shed
Through the darkness of the gable,
And he saw an angel's face
Filling all the wretched stable

With its glory and its grace.
"Follow me!" the sweet voice said,
And he followed where it led.

VIII.

Through the cloister, through the yard,
Through the church (whose doors, unbarr'd
By the hands of viewless wardens,
Opened wide before the twain),
Lo! the angel and Liffardus
Came at last to Death's domain,
To the graveyard grim and gray,
Where the dead Cistercians lay.

IX.

Down a starry vista looms
The long avenue of tombs,
And Liffardus shrinks with terror
From the view on ev'ry side,
For the earth is cleft (O horror!)
And the graves are open wide!

And he sees, 'mid mold and worms,
A thousand ghastly forms!

X.

In their winding-sheets laid bare—
All the balmy midnight air
Is pregnant with the odor
Of their terrible decay.
And each corse (a dread foreboder)
Seems to murmur, "Yesterday,
Dearest brother, was for *me*,
But to-day may be for *thee!*"

XI.

Then the angel grave and stern
On the trembling monk doth turn,
And in clarion-tones out crieth,
"O thou tempted one! take heed.
When, erelong, *thy* corse low lieth,
And the worms upon it feed,
Will earth's pleasures, gold or station,
Profit then thy soul's salvation?"

XII.

Was it all a midnight dream?
—Silver-white the moonrays stream
On the pallet poor and lowly
Where the lone Liffardus lies.
In a rapture deep and holy,
Doth the grateful monk arise,
And, with moist uplifted eyes,
Prayeth softly, prayeth slowly,
"Everlasting thanks to Thee,
Source of meek humility!

XIII.

"Bearing part in Christ's dear shame,
Pride and pleasure, wealth and fame,
I renounce henceforth forever:
Living poor, despised, unknown,
It shall be my chief endeavor
Thee to serve, and Thee alone!
For *Thy* sake, O Love divine!
'Twill be sweet to tend the swine!"

ST. NICHOLAS AND THE DOVES.

I.

THIS a legend of the past,
(In old books and paintings seen),
Of the Augustinian hermit
Nicholas of Tolentine;
How within his cell he lay
Once upon his pallet bare,
With a mortal sickness on him
Born of penance and of prayer;
While the sunshine, like a flame,
Thro' the western window came.

II.

How it lit his wasted cheek,
With the glory of the skies!
Touched his pale, etherial temples,
And illumed his lifted eyes;
And a halo seemed to shed
Round the tonsure on his head!

III.

Till he cried: "O brothers! see,
What a glorious light it is!
Jacob's ladder, thronged with angels,
Must have been, indeed, like this!
For the blesséd spirits go
Up and down, with constant wing,
With their tender voices calling
And their white hands beckoning!
Ah! if God should deem it best,
I would fain go up and rest!"

IV.

But the Prior said: "Nay, nay,"
(Bending o'er his saintly son),
"Thou must not depart, Nicolo,
Till thy ministry is done.
And it is the Master's will
(Since thou art so faint and ill),
For a time thou shouldst relax
Those austerities of thine

Which have worn thy feeble body,
To a shadow,—son of mine!
Therefore, thro' obedience,
Thou must break thine abstinence."

V.

At a sign, a monk appeared,
Bearing on a wooden dish
Two small doves (a feast prepared
Solely at the Prior's wish):
And the good Superior
Turning to the saint once more,
Said: "O true and faithful son!
Make thy victory complete;
Scorning ev'ry foolish scruple,—
Take, and through obedience, eat!"

VI.

Nicholas looked up and smiled,
Tranquil as a little child:
Took, with outstretch'd hand, the doves

(Roasted at the Prior's wish),
And serenely made the symbol
Of the cross above the dish.

VII.

Lo! a miracle of faith!
Ere the monks a word could utter,
They beheld the little creatures
On the dish begin to flutter,—
Ope their eyes and stretch their wings,
Happy, shining, *living* things!

VIII.

Thro' the sunny window fell
Ivy shadows on the floor:
And a fragrance from the garden
Floated thro' the open door.
It was spring-time in the land,
(Tender grass and golden mist),
As the little doves exulting
Settled on Nicolo's wrist;
Then, up-soaring thro' the air,

While the hermit smiling lay,
Round his bed went sailing, sailing,
In a graceful, grateful way,—
'Till, at last, (the window neared),
Thro' the vines, they disappeared!

THE TRUE CHRISTMAS TREE.

I.

THE Sagas tell in Norseland,
Of mighty Ygdra Sel,—
The sacred, three-prong'd Ash-tree,
Which heaven, earth and hell
Sustains and binds together;
While, from its roots up-spring
Three fountains, whence the Virtues
Are ever issuing.

II.

Veiled in the Sagas' story
Is Calvary's blest Tree—
Earth, heaven, purgatory,
Its Rood-borne trinity.
While from its roots three fountains
Forever leap and shine—
Well-springs of all God's graces,
Faith, Hope and Love divine!

ST. WULSTAN'S CROZIER.

THE Norman king and the Norman courtiers
Spake of old to the Saxon saint,
Wulstan, bishop of ancient Worcester,
Last of the Saxon prelates quaint:

"Thy beard is long and thy Saxon jargon
Soundeth rude to our Norman ears,—
Doff thy mitre, resign thy crozier!"
—The eyes of Wulstan swam with tears,

As down he stepped from his grand old minster,
Down to the ancient abbey came,
Unto the tomb of sainted Edward,
King, Confessor, of deathless fame.

There, in the midst of the Norman courtiers,
Praying, he faced their eyes of gloom,—
Doff'd his mitre, and smote his crozier
Firm on the stone of the dead king's tomb.

Ope'd the marble hand of the monarch,
(Hid below in its cavern cold,)
Caught the gilded staff of the bishop,
Clutched it fast in its rigid hold.

Bare of head, with his feet unsandaled,
Wulstan knelt at the royal shrine ;—
Wrestled the while the proud invaders,
Seeking to free the staff divine.

Vainly their martial hands assailed it,
Vainly shook it with arms of might,
King, Confessor, the sainted Edward
Kept firm hold of the crozier bright.

Till, spent with struggle, and half-affrighted,
Cried to the Saint, the malcontents :
" Don thy mitre,—resume thy crozier—
Be sure we meant thee no offence ! "

Sweet the smile of the brave old bishop
"See how God protects His own !
His the power, and *His* the crozier ! "
—And lo ! with ease, with a calm composure,
He drew the staff from the yielding stone !

THE MASTER'S CLOAK.

UNDER the archway, carved and quaint,
(In th' hush of the court-yard, bleak, forlorn),
Zita, the wonderful servant-saint,
Stood at the dawn of a winter's morn

Zita, whose modest eyes now shine
From many a rich Italian shrine:
Zita, whose visage mild and brown,
(Under its gemm'd and golden crown),
From many a splendid niche looks down;
There, in the days of her poor estate,
—Centuries gone, in Lucca town,—
Stood in the dawn at her master's gate,
Lantern in hand, about to pass
Forth, in the gloom, to the blessèd Mass.

Ah! what a pitiless dawn it was!
Keen and raw was the wind that blew:

E'en in the instant's fleeting pause,
It pierced the maiden through and through;
And her scanty shawl and her raiment thin
Were drench'd with the rain as it drifted in.
Angel-eyes thro' the shadows bent
Their looks of love on the lonely girl;
Over the portal, came and went
Beautiful shapes on their wings of pearl.
But other presence than angels fair
Followed the maid as she linger'd there,
And a pair of eyes at the latticed pane,
Were moist with something that was not rain.

"Zita!"—she started, half afraid,
(The voice was full of a grave command,
And the circle of light her lantern made
Revealed her master close at hand):
"Zita, poor child! your shawl is old,
The rain falls fast, and the wind blows cold,
Take this, my daughter,"—and, while he spoke,
He folded about her his ermine cloak,
And, ere she could utter a word, had pass'd
Through the court-yard gate, and lock'd it fast.

Merrily sweet, like a skylark singing,
A bell, high up thro' the rain, was ringing,
And Zita followed the well-known sound
With feet that scarcely touched the ground;
Her heart, like a chalice of precious wine,
Running over and over with faith divine.

Close to the church-porch dimly grand,
A beggar was kneeling with outstretch'd hand,
Kneeling, unshorn, on the cold, wet flags,
A mass of ulcers, half-clothed with rags;
Such hopeless want in his abject air,
That Zita paused with a murmured prayer.

Silver or gold she had none to give,—
For the maiden's purse was a ceaseless sieve,
(Sifting Love's alms over shrine and street);
But, tender and true, in her breast arose
A marvellous balm for the beggar's woes;
And her tears of sympathy, warm and sweet,
Fell with the rain on his naked feet.

Could she kneel to pray in a cloak of fur,
While the robe of her Lord was torn and scant?

Would His gracious ear incline to *her*,
If she left Him to perish of cold and want?

With never a thought that the gift belonged
To one whom she would not, for worlds, have wronged,
She saw but her Lord in the beggar's form,
And cast on his shoulders the mantle warm;
Then, hurrying in to a secret spot
In the grand old church, all else forgot,
She fell on her knees and knew no more
Till the night drew near. . . . At the castle-door,
She stood with her own poor garments on,
And the rich fur cloak of the master gone!

Out of the portal looked a face
With serious eyes and flowing beard;
Under the swinging lamp, appeared
A reverend presence, full of grace.
"Zita!—(how grave and stern he spoke!)
"What hast thou done with thy master's cloak?"

The maiden, fearing to move or speak,
Bowed to the dust with a blushing cheek,
While the penitent tears began to swim
In her lovely eyes, downcast and dim.

"Zita, I charge thee, speak the truth,
And thou shalt not suffer hurt or harm,"—
A pause,—a rustle of wings,—forsooth,
It filled the maid with a vague alarm,
Behold! in the midst, a princely youth
Stood *with the lost cloak on his arm!*

Brighter than diamonds were his eyes,
Richer than gold his sunny hair;
The master kneeling, in grave surprise,
Knew that an angel had enter'd there.
And he hid his face with awe, and prayed
As the stranger pass'd to the servant-maid,
Pass'd on to Zita, with pinions fleet,
And laid the cloak at her humble feet.

Then, there were bursts of seraph-singing,
And tinkle of harps, and cymbals ringing;

While heavenly light and odors rare
Filled with splendor the dusky air.

But over it all, supremely free,
One glorious Voice, thro' the rise and fall
Of the angel-chorus, seemed to call;
"O love! O dove! I am debtor to thee,
And blesséd forever shalt thou be;
For inasmuch as thou didst this deed,
Unto the beggar in his need,
Zita, thou didst it unto Me!"

FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE.

I.

FORTY souls, intrepid, pure,
Strong to suffer and endure,
Forty soldiers of Sebaste,
Christian soldiers, long ago,
For their faith were, naked, cast
In a pool of ice and snow.

II.

Close at hand, across the path,
Stood a warm, delicious bath,
Where, beneath the star-light dim,
Any coward, sin-entic'd,
Might immerse each frozen limb,
And apostatize from Christ.

III.

Up and down the pathway cold
Strode the pagan-keeper bold;

O'er the victims keeping guard,—
Watching till the fight was done,
Watching till the struggle hard,
With the martyr's crown, was won.

IV.

Martyr's crown? The keeper raised
Wond'ring eyes, which wildly gazed
On a vision in the air!—
O'er the pool, thro' star-light soft,
Angel-shapes were floating fair,
Bearing starry crowns aloft!

V.

Crowns for all? Ah! no, ah! no,—
As the pagan reckon'd slow,
Counting out the chaplets rare,
Floating in a mystic line,—
Forty victims suffered there,——
Crowns there were but *thirty-nine!*

VI.

Mused the keeper, full of awe,
On this sight,—when lo! he saw,
In a trice, from out the pond,
One apostate, weak and young,
Who, despairing, rush'd beyond,
And into the warm bath sprung!

VII.

Rang aloft a piercing cry!—
On the instant doom'd to die,
Faith, and life, and Heaven lost—
Sank the poor, deluded fool!—
Swift aside his garments toss'd,
Sprang the keeper in the pool!

VIII.

"Christ, my God! I believe!" he said,
"Let *me* suffer in his stead!"—
Then the long, cold hours pass'd. . . .
But when morning mastered night,
Forty martyrs of Sebaste
Wore in Heaven their crowns of light!

THE KEY OF HEAVEN.

IN an old Franciscan cloister,
In the fair South-Germany,
Lay the convent-tailor dying,
Holy old lay-brother, he.

Holy Brother Bonaventure,
He had labored long and well:
On his bed, amid his brethren,
Lay he dying in his cell.

All the solemn prayers were uttered,
All the sacred rites were given,—
Spake the dying from his pillow,
"Bring to me my Key of Heaven."

"Key of Heaven?—Call the Prior!"
And the Prior softly came,
Bringing to the sinking friar
An old missal of that name.

Slow the dying head was shaken,—
"Key of Heaven?" Quick as thought,
Crucifix, and Rule, and Chaplet,
To the monk, in turn, were brought.

All in vain.—The brethren marveled:
What could be the Key he craved?
Surely such demand unusual
Was the plea of one who raved.

Last, uprose an aged friar,
Bowed obedience left and right,
From a nook beside the fire,
Brought a *something* small and bright;

Brought it to the bed, and placed it
Where they saw it thro' their tears,
'Twas the needle of the tailor,
Wherewith he had wrought for years!

Ah! to see the dim eyes brighten!
Ah! to see the white lips smile!
Round the tool the chill hands tightened,
Broken words he spake the while:

"Many years, old friend, we've labored,—
Ev'ry stitch I made with thee
Was for God's dear glory taken—
For the blest Eternity!

"Now, when life's last cords are riven,
Blessed needle!" (soft he cries),—
"Thou shalt be my Key of Heaven,
Thou shalt ope *my* Paradise!"

On the instant, fled the spirit,
Smiling in his waxen rest,
Lay the Brother Bonaventure
With the needle on his breast.

All the monks around him kneeling,
(Startled at such swift release,)
Question with the deepest feeling,
"Doth he truly rest in peace?"

"Brethren!" prays the weeping Prior,
"May *his* end to all be given!
May the life-work of each friar
Be, indeed, his Key to Heaven!"

ESTRADA'S SPOUSE.

THE LEGEND OF THE PERSIAN PRINCESS.

WITHIN her palace, in the Hall of Mirrors,
One glorious day in Spring—
'Mid all the glamour of the glittering mirrors,
The daughter of the King,

A Princess, young and innocent and tender,
Sat silent and alone,
In satin robes, whose wealth of trailing splendor
Half-veiled her ivory throne.

Her lustrous eyes like liquid sapphires gleaming,
Her white hand 'neath her head—
The noble maid was dreaming—dreaming—dreaming
Of him she soon should wed.

Her Persian prince ; how grand his royal bearing!
How grave his manly face !
His soul so full of chivalry and daring !
His form so full of grace!

'Mid all the flower of her father's courtiers,
Was none as fair as *he !*
"O prince of men!" she sighed, and blushing faltered,
"Who can compare with thee?"

Lo ! on the instant, swift as though it lightened,
A glory filled the air ;
And all the lofty room was warmed and brightened
By one grand Presence there !

No mortal eye had seen the Stranger enter,
No ear had heard His tread,
Yet there, resplendent, in the chamber's centre,
He stood unheralded.

A tall and stately shape, divinely moulden,
In regal vestments clad;
His floating hair and beard, a halo golden,
Around a visage glad.

Deep, earnest eyes, supremely true and tender,
A brow majestic, mild,
Upon the startled maiden fair and tender,
The radiant Vision smiled.

"Behold!" He sighed, and (strange to say) as slowly
He raised His gracious Hand,
Across the velvet of its palm all holy,
She saw a Wound expand.

A deep red Wound, which, like a flaming jewel,
Shone with a ruddy light:
Ah! who (she thought) had dared with weapon cruel
That beauteous Hand to smite?

"Look round!" He said: and then, the king's
fair daughter,
Turning, beheld it all!—
Like clearest stretch of calm, unruffled water,
The mirrors on the wall

Reflected back the beauty and the glory,
Of that Eternal King—
Whose endless praise in sweetest song and story
The Bards of Heaven sing.

"Hear, and take heed, O child of My affection!"
The dulcet Voice pursued,
"Each faithful mirror's pure and true reflection
Of Mine own pulchritude:

"Each curve, and tint, and line—each shining
shimmer
Of robes reflected there,
The Brow, the Lip, the Eye—the golden glimmer
Of every single hair,

"Are symbols, dear Estrada, of My creatures
In whom My beauties shine:
The human soul's celestial form and features,
Reflecting the Divine!

"And wilt thou love the unsubstantial shadow
More than the substance true?
O virgin Princess! innocent Estrada,
Wilt thou, in vain, pursue

"An apparition fair, but falsely fleeting,
Which fades before 'tis won;
A bright chimera evermore retreating
Before the changeless One?

"Look on My Wounds, and tell me, young Estrada,
Shall phantoms claim thy vows?
Wilt thou, indeed, prefer this mortal shadow
To thine immortal Spouse?"

—The Persian princess heard, and, swift uprising,
Drew close her virgin zone;
With burning love, with faith and hope surprising,
She stepp'd from off her throne.

Her lovely face aglow with glad decision,
(O maid, supremely blest!)
Her arms, like lilies, twining round the Vision,
Her head upon His breast,—

In ringing tones, she cries: "The dream is over!—
No bride of earth I'll be!
O Lord, my God! my first Eternal Lover!
I leave all loves for *Thee!*"

THE SHEPHERD'S FEAST.

TO-NIGHT in far-off, quaint Liguria,
This CHRISTMAS EVE, in Genoa the fair,—
Fair, even thro' the veil of dim despair
Which later lawless years have roughly spread
Over the glory of her classic head,—
This sacred Eve, in ancient Genoa,
The silvern bells are swinging thro' the hush
Of night's high noon; and all the city swarms
Unto the Midnight Mass. Gay, motley forms,
Whose olive faces in the darkness flush
With tenderest emotions,—lo! they hold
To one devout tradition, still most dear,
(A Christian idyl), which, from year to year,
Renews itself in pastoral delight;
A relic of the ages primitive,—a rite,
Sublimely grand, and touching to behold,—
It glorifies the Christ-Child's natal night!

When midnight frosts upon the mountains creep,
The shepherds from the Alps descend in pairs:
Fresh, stalwart youths, and men with silver hairs,
And little sturdy boys, (who lead the sheep
To grassy spots upon the pastures steep),—
Like chamois, from the mountains springing down,
They march, in pairs, across the dusky town.

Erect and grave the troop—with faces brown,
Their hair unshorn, their torn cloaks fluttering,
Hardy as oaks their native snow-drifts crown,
They from their vigils and their scanty sleep,—
While flaring torch-flames o'er them blaze and leap—,
Have snatched this hour to march, and, marching, sing
The praises of the new-born Saviour-King!

With many a Christmas carol, quaint and old,
Pealing in liquid sweetness from their throats,
On, thro' through the crowded *Strada*, bright and cold;

'Neath vi'let skies, which many a star doth gem,
(So like the skies of ancient Bethlehem,
And they so like the ancient shepherds bold!)
The strange procession, as a vision, floats
Into the church, ablaze with pearls and gold,
Where all of Genoa seems waiting them.

A murmur, as from wind-blown forests, stirs
The mighty throng; and thro' them, marching mute,
(Their cheeks like roseate, o'er-ripen'd fruit,)
These simple shepherds, these grave worshippers,
Poor as the Christ they hasten to adore,—
Are swift assigned by sumptuous officers,
The post of honor on that sacred floor.

They kneel—they kiss the dust, prostrated low;
O *Gloria in excelsis!*—from behind
A curtain, soar wild doves as white as snow,
Released from jesses of the purest flax;
Meek emblems of the *Et in terra pax!*
—The angel's song in their soft plaint doth find
Celestial echoes, musical and low.

'Tis well. The nobles and the knights make way,
And all the civic troops, with banners gay,
Follow in file ; (what time their armor bright
Flashes and sparkles in the torches' light,)
The flow'r of court and camp, alike, give way,
To form a background to that strange display,
And kneel amid the common herd, to-night.

Shepherds, alone, on this the SHEPHERDS' FEAST,
Sons of the Alpine avalanche and storm,
Precursors of the Monarchs of the East,—
Alone, to-night, must circle shrine and priest,
And with their glowing hearts a bulwark form
To keep the dear BAMBINO safe and warm!

O, Blessed Babe! now art thou born again
In "*House of Bread.*" * O, grave, adoring men!
With streaming eyes, lift up your hardy hands,
And offer your *ex-voto* beautiful,—
A little, fleecy lamb, with many bands
Of rainbow-ribbons, brightening its wool ;—

* Bethlehem—*the House of Bread.*

Type of the Lamb of God! His golden rule,
Well doth it image, creature meek and fair;
And thus the old tradition, ripe with prayer,
And mellow with the harvest-heats of Time,
Repeats its tableau, simple yet sublime,
This CHRISTMAS EVE in Genoa, the rare.

THE TEMPTED NUN.

ONCE, it chanced for our instruction, full
three hundred years agone,
In an old Italian convent lived and toiled
a saintly nun.

Fast and prayer and bitter penance had her flesh
transparent made,
Till the grace of God shone thro' her, as a lamp
thro' crystal shade.

But, the while a saintly unction penetrated all she
did,
Like a serpent, in her bosom lay a cruel sorrow
hid.

Day and night that true heart panted with a
terror never calmed,
By a dread voice ever haunted :—" *Thou art des-
tined to be damned !*

"*Do thy best and strive thy strongest, Hell is thine eternal lot!*"
—So the wild temptation lasted,—though her will consented not.

But, at length, when life grew weary with the anguish of her fate,
Led by God, Saint Philip Neri came to speak her at the grate.

On her knees, the suff'ring Sister poured her sorrows in his ear,—
Sobbing, broke the seal of silence;—spake in words her secret fear.

Joyous smiled the blithe Saint Philip: "Christ was slain for sinners. Now,
By that Blood that opened heaven,—tell me, daughter, what art thou?"

"Ah! a most unworthy sinner!"—and her tears began to shine;
"Then rejoice!" cried out Saint Philip, "Paradise is thine—is thine!"

As the lightning cleaves and scatters noxious
vapors with its dart,
Hope, that hour, drove the darkness from the
poor nun's brain and heart.

Buoyant sped she to the choir,—buoyant sped
she to the class,
Such a sunshine gushing from her, it was joy to
see her pass.

Never more the foul temptation made her saintly
soul its shrine ;
Till her death her heart kept singing : " Paradise
is mine—is mine ! "

SIR VERITAS AND THE KING.

THE courtiers gathered round the throne
and plied the King with praises:
"Wiser art thou than Solomon!" cried
they in fulsome phrases:

"Greater than David in the prime of all his regal
glory;
Braver than he of feudal time, renown'd in song
and story:

"Thy manly beauty is the theme that thrills the
bards with pleasure;
The wealth of Ind melts like a dream before thy
golden treasure!"

So, link by link, they forged a chain to bind their
royal master
Unto their ends. A cloud of pain, a foreshade of
disaster

Loomed darkly on the monarch's front. He turned in sudden anger
To one who, silent, bore the brunt of all that courtly clangor:

Sir Veritas, his oldest knight, his bravest and his wisest:
"We pray thee, sirrah, speak outright the scorn thou ill disguisest!

"Silent may fare that tongue of thine, but mute are not these glances
Which smite our heart with force condign, like stroke of poison'd lances!

"Speak, Veritas!" The courtier old stood forth before his fellows,
With brow as stern, with mien as bold, as dauntless as Othello's:

"I cannot join these sycophants in lauding thee, my sire;
For indignation's burning lance hath smote me with its fire.

"If thou wert wise as Solomon, and greater far
than David,
Or hadst thou, lion-hearted one, our cause from
ruin savéd,

"Right gladly would I add my meed to swell thy
tide of glory,
To bid thee live, in word and deed, renown'd in
song and story;

"But hear, O King! the bitter truth from tongue
that ne'er deceived thee—
Thou art a tyrant without ruth—our wrongs have
never grieved thee!

"Thy people's miseries have ne'er divorced thee
from thy treasures,
Their hunger and their gaunt despair have never
dash'd thy pleasures!

"They groaned beneath their weary load; thine
ears have hearkened gaily.
The ocean of their tears hath flowed around thy
footstool daily;

"But thou wert blind, as well as deaf; on Self
thy thoughts were centred;
Lo! to thy closet, hope-bereft, Nemesis now hath
entered!"

Out leaped the great soul of the King, from eyes
with wonder flaming;
He glared around upon that ring of serfs, their
falsehood shaming;

Glared fiercely on those parasites who spake him
but to flatter;
"Come, Veritas—reform these knights—whose
coward teeth do chatter!

"Reform them in thy valiant school, wherein are
fashioned heroes;
Who speaks of fame (if knave or fool), confounds
our fame with Nero's!

"O, Veritas!"—(pride at an end—the strong
man's tears fast streaming)—
"Praise God for one just, fearless friend, above
all venal scheming!

"Our premier be thou, henceforth, with wisdom
crown'd, and beauty,
Who dared to tell thy King the truth, and nerve
him to his duty."

OUR LADY OF THE LAMP.

I.

ER maiden face, so grave and sweet
Is full of gentle majesty;
From curl-crown'd Head to dimpled Feet,
The infant Christ is fair to see;
And on the Mother's left,—behold!
A lamp of bronze, antique and quaint,
Whose wind-blown flame of fiery gold,
Glows, like a gem, 'mid shadows faint.

II.

Her virgin hand that lamp hath trimm'd;
Beside its lustre, pure and mild,
Oft hath she wrought;—with rays undimm'd,
Oft held it o'er her sleeping Child·
Or, in the window of the room,
Hath set it, trembling like a star,

To cheer St. Joseph thro' the gloom,
And guide his footsteps from afar.

III.

O gracious Lady of the Lamp!
We, too, like Joseph, need thy light;
Our path is dim with shadows damp,
We grope towards thee thro' the night.
The world's true Light is in thine arms;
Ah! lift Him high, and let Him shine
Upon our darkness; naught alarms
The soul which hails that Lamp divine!

IV.

And when along the vale of Death,
We journey slowly to our home,
The *Home*, *sweet Home* of Christian faith,
Which rears afar its azure dome:
Ah! leaning from the window's height,
Swing forth thy lamp across the gloom,
And lead us, Lady of the Light!
Safe thro' the shadows of the tomb!

THE FRUIT OF OBEDIENCE.

"GO," said the Abbot to hermit John,
"Take the staff thou leanest on,
Plant it deep in the desert's sand,
And water it daily with lavish hand,
Till it beareth fruit!"
Humble of heart, and grave, and mute,

The hermit bowed, and the word obeyed.
The spring gushed clear in the distant glade,
And many a weary step he took
Ere the water was brought from the crystal brook

To the planted staff,
Where plenty had come to nod and laugh
At the gray-hair'd Brother's simplicity.
Lo! at the wane of summers three,
The staff took root in the sand one day,
Blossomed and bloomed in a wondrous way,

And beauteous bore—
Of luscious fruit, such a golden store;
The aged hermit, full of glee,
Plucked it fast from the bending tree,
And, where the monks at the Abbot's feet,
Sat in the cloister's cool defence,
Cried to his brethren: "Take and eat,—
It is the fruit of obedience!"

AN EASTER LESSON.

HOW often o'er departed joys we moan,
And, musing, sigh in accents of regret,
"Oh! who will roll us back the heavy stone
Which at the tomb of buried Hope is set?"

But coming, lo! we smile,—for angels fair
Have been before us at the gloomy gates;
The stone is rolled away; and, radiant, there,
Brave Love, on risen Hope, exultant, waits!

AN ARAB'S LOGIC.

A SKEPTIC, through the wilderness of Zin,
Was guided by a faithful Bedouin;

And evermore, whene'er the fierce simoom
Swept up the desert on its wing of gloom;

Or when the waters failed, and (for their lack),
The weary camels faltered in their track,—

The skeptic noticed that, with outstretch'd hands,
The Arab flung himself upon the sands,

And pressed his turbaned forehead to the ground,
And hid his face in silence most profound.

"Now, wherefore kneelest thou?"—the skeptic cried
At last, in wonder. "Wherefore, O, my guide,

"Prostrate thyself in this lone desert place,
And in thy *bournous* muffle up thy face?"

"I kneel to worship God," the Arab said,
"To worship God, and beg His helping aid!"

"A God? a God?"—the scoffer laughed, "Poor fool!
'Tis plain to see thou never went'st to school!

"Thou seest naught, thou hearest naught, dull clod!
How dost thou know there ever was a God?"

"How do I know?" the Bedouin upraised
His stately head, and on the speaker gazed:

A native dignity, a grave surprise,
Rounding the arches of his dusky eyes.

"How do I know that in the darkness, went
Last night, a wand'ring camel past my tent,

"And not a man? How know I? you demand,
Lo! by the prints he left upon the sand!

"And now, behold! thou unbelieving one!"—
And, turning westward to the setting sun,

The Arab's finger pointed to the glow
Of rosy radiance upon clouds of snow,—

"How know I that there is a God on high?
Lo! by His footprints in yon glorious sky!"

THE STAR OF THE KINGS.

ON the roof of an Eastern palace afar,
Three Kings, in the midnight, sat of yore:—
Beautiful, bearded Baltazar,
And gray-hair'd Gaspard, and Melchior.

Gravely they sat, and they spake no word,
Their hearts were full of an awe serene;
And under their royal vestments stirred
The thrill of a Presence, sublime, unseen;

For, clear in the zone of the sapphire skies,
—A new, strange jewel, bright to see—
They watched, thro' the mist of their yearning eyes,
The Star of an ancient Prophecy!

Low, to the east, it, drooping, shined
With a roseate glow, as of coming morn,

Trailing a line of light behind,
  Like a brilliant lamp by an angel borne.

Said Gaspard: "Brothers, our sign hath come!"
  Cried Melchior: "'Tis a marvelous thing!"
Breathed Baltazar: "Farewell, old home!—
  We follow the Star of Judah's King!"

Then, down thro' the latticed halls below,—
  Past the grand saloons of their crown'd consorts,
Past the bright-eyed children who come and go,
—The Kings press on to the outer courts.

The camels are loosed from the royal tents,
  Their bells ring sweet on the spicy air;
The myrrh and the musky frankincense
  Are mixed with the gold which the Arabs bear.

And, forth in the night, those men of lore
  Follow, like children, the CHRIST-CHILD'S Star.
God speed ye, Gaspard and Melchior!
  God speed thee, beautiful Baltazar!

ST. JOSEPH'S CHARGE.

SPAKE of old the shining Angel to St. Joseph, Mary's spouse,
When the Magi had departed from his lowly little house;

While the midnight shadows floated, like a veil, o'er Bethlehem,
(Like a veil of dusky tissue, 'sprent with many a starry gem!)

In his dreams, the great Archangel spake to Joseph warningly:
"Take the Infant and His Mother, rise, and into Egypt flee!"

Lo! behold, the saint arising, woke the Mother from her sleep,
Roused the Babe upon her bosom from His slumbers calm and deep,

And beneath the friendly cover of the night, without delay,
Swift across the arid desert unto Egypt sped away!

In that hour of worldless terror, dread of Herod's cruel sword,
When upon the weary journey, Mary bore her Son and Lord,

Think you, that her face was clouded, that her brow was dark with care?
That the anguish of the exile marked her virgin features fair?

Think you, that her soul was riven with a wild, o'ermastering fright?
That her thoughts were tempest driven, as the leaves by storm-wind's might?

No! ah, no! beneath her mantle, to her bosom closely press'd,
Lay the Holy Infant Jesus, sleeping sweetly on her breast.

Calm her brow, serene and peaceful as a drift of
moonlit snow:
Like to mountain lakes, all tranquil, shone her
placid eyes below;

Tokens of a soul untroubled, of a heart whose vir-
gin zone
Shrined the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as a treasure
all its own!

How could anguish rend her spirit, sorrow cloud
her visage blest,
While that holy Heart was beating, burning, glow-
ing, on her breast?

Joy of angels, bliss of heaven, light and bloom of
earth below!
Heart of Jesus! only Mary all Thy joy and bliss
could know!

And the while, across the desert, thro' the wood-
land and the wild,
To the darksome land of Egypt fled the Mother
with her Child;

All the strength and all the sweetness of the
Sacred Heart divine
Flowed into her stainless bosom, like a draught of
golden wine,

Filling all her soul with courage, nerving all her
maiden heart,
With a noble, deathless vigor, none save Jesus
can impart!

Clients of that Heart celestial—to It bound by
tend'rest ties,
Finding in Its sparkling fountain all the goods of
Paradise,

Let us follow thro' the desert sainted Joseph,
Mary blest,
Holding fast the Heart of Jesus like a buckler on
the breast!

Sure that naught of sin or sorrow, naught of
doubt or wild despair,
E'er assail the happy bosom which that golden
shield doth bear;

Sure that in the land of Egypt, when that Heart
asserts its sway,
All the idols of the Gentiles, tottering, shall fall
away!

AN EASTER LILY.

BATHED in the glory of the Easter morn,
Steeped in its gladness and its fresh delight,
The lily lifts its head—a symbol-white
Of Christ, the Risen One . . . This day newborn
He is issues from the sepulchre forlorn,
His raiment whiter than the lily's snow,
His bright hair flung (like tassels of the corn),
From radiant brow and blessed eyes aglow!"

In the dark earth, the lily's seed was sown;
In the black grave, the Crucified was laid;
From dusky mold, the fairest flower hath grown,
And Christ has risen from the tomb's dark shade!
Of Easter lilies let His crown be made!
Let Easter lilies in His path be strewn!

CHAPLET AT COVENTRY.

A. D. 1040.

THE gentle child of a noble house,
Lady Godiva was fair to see;
The dove-eyed dame of a cruel spouse,
She dwelt with her lord at Coventry.

What time the weight of the nuptial cross
Pressed on her spirit heavily,
She knelt in the minster, wreathed with moss,
And told the beads of her Rosary.

Jewels were they, on a chain of gold,—
Diamonds, rubies, and pearls—all three;
Amethysts, opals, and garnets old,
Emeralds, green as the sunlit sea.

They slipped through her fingers, day by day;
And oft, in the nights, when her tears flowed free,
They calmed and cheered in a heav'nly way,
The care-crowned Lady of Coventry!

Till, prone, one noon, in her nun-like cell,
(White and cold as the snow on the lea),
They found the lady they loved so well,
Clasping her priceless Rosary!

Sorrow was over, and tears, and pain;
The suffering spirit, at last, set free;
They loosed from her fingers the shining chain,
And bore it away right tenderly, —

Bore it unto the house of prayer,
To the shrine of Our Lady of Purity,
Around the neck of her image fair,
Entwined the jewels reverently.

And there they glow to this very day, —
The holy Chaplet of Coventry;
"Praise to our Queen!" the pilgrims pray,
And, "Lady Godiva, peace to thee!"

THE SINGING LEPER.

DEEP is the heart of a solitude,
A huntsman, straying, found
A dying leper in a wood,
Stretched, singing, on the ground.

Yea, singing on a bed of ferns,
In strains so sweet and strong,
That never had the huntsman heard
So ravishing a song:

"I see a glory in the air,
And in the midst thereof,
A radiant Face. O grave and fair!
How full of pitying love!"

So ran the words. The strong man stooped
Above the leprous thing;
"God save thee, brother of the worms,
How canst, forsaken, sing?"

Out of the pallid lips, the sweet
Unearthly whisper stole:
"There's nothing save this wall of flesh
'Twixt heaven and my soul;

"This foul, corrupted wall of flesh—
Behold! it drops away.
Should not the ransomed captive sing?
I shall be free to-day!"

And even as the huntsman gazed,
Loosed was the singer's soul;
A shower of lilies hid the corse,—
The leper was made whole.

THE BIRTH OF THE HOLLY.

WHEN the Shepherds came to the holy
Cave
(Their lambs, like snowdrifts, bring-
ing),
While, under the stars, the Angels brave
Their songs of praise were singing,

They found with awe at the Stable-door,
Where the Christmas-snows lay whitest,—
With awe and fear, at the Stable-door,
Where the Christmas-stars shone brightest,—

A shrub, 'round which sweet fancy weaves
Her spell; at Yuletide showing
Its jagged, emerald, glossy leaves
With blood-red berries glowing.

Amazed, the Shepherds softly said:
"Who, 'mid the snows, hath set it?"—
An Angel drifting overhead
Replied: "Ah! ne'er forget it!

"The symbol 'tis of days to be,
Foreseen by prophet-dreamer,—
The future's spinous misery
Awaiting earth's Redeemer.

"Behold, in each sharp-pointed leaf,
The knife of Circumcision,—
The thorns, the nails, which Love and Grief
Salute with tear-dimm'd vision.

"And in each scarlet berry view
The Blood-drops, pure and holy,
Of Him Who here is born for you,
A Saviour meek and lowly!"

—The Shepherds heard. Their wisdom poor
This world may scorn as folly,—
But, kneeling at the Stable-door,
They hailed the Christmas Holly.

A MIDSUMMER MEMORY.

I.

WE sat among the graves that summer gloaming,
I and my gentle friend, Sœur Amadée;
—Beyond the fence with honeysuckle blooming,
The convent-garden in the twilight lay,
Its dewy blossoms filling all the air
With incense, like the memory of prayer.

A few fair stars the pleasant skies were sprinkling,
And over ev'ry grassy mound and tomb
Unnumbered fire-flies were twinkling, twinkling
Their tiny splendors thro' the deep'ning gloom;
The Sister laid her slender hand on mine
And said, "How wondrously they float and shine!

"How pure, yet how pathetic, is the glory
These little creatures bear beneath their wings!
Methinks the precious souls from Purgatory
Are mimicked in the fiery, floating things.

Oh! had we angel-eyes, we might discern
How tranquilly those spirits float and burn!

"See!"—and she raised the chaplet from her girdle,
"One little bead may win a soul's release
Let us not loiter here, serene and idle,
While suff'ring spirits call to us for peace!"
—And to and fro we paced, and pacing said
The holy chaplet for the waiting dead.

II.

Twilight again; and here again I ponder
The mystery that curtains nameless tombs:
A few faint stars are out, and over yonder
The convent-garden in the dimness blooms
Its well-remember'd odors o'er me cast,
As in that quiet gloaming of the past,

I sit alone, no figure veiled and saintly
Leans thro' the purple silence as to speak,
The clear eyes raised, the wild-rose tinging faintly
The white, transparent oval of her cheek.

Between that face and mine, there sways a screen
Of churchyard grass and periwinkle green.

Wet, whisp'ring grass,—low, waving periwinkle,—
Beneath the dewy roots she lieth, fair
In sleeping loveliness; and lo! the twinkle
Of floating fire-flies is in the air:
So pure, yet so pathetic, in their glory,
Like little glowing souls from Purgatory!

O dear departed spirit! art thou near me?
Dost come in gentle flames, lost Amadée,
To hover 'round thy grieving friend? Ah! hear me,
Thou shalt not go uncomforted away;
For love shall build a bridge of *Aves* blest
Whereby thy soul shall enter into rest.

SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR.

I.

SOOTHING strain of solemn harmony
My footsteps stayed upon an unknown street;
Methought I caught melodious Latin words,
And chanting of young voices fresh and sweet;
And close at hand, thro' studded doors ajar,
A taper glimmered like a distant star.

II.

A golden cross on high—a golden cross
Sunk, like a jewel, in the polished wall:
To pass the threshold was to see the font
Of blessed water in the outer hall;
And prayerful statues gleaming thro' a mist
Of incense, by the fading sunlight kissed.

III.

Gothic the little chapel, pure and quaint,
Its altar decked with lilies freshly blown;
The frescoed ceiling fair with floating saints—
A sculptured Christ upon a cross of stone.
"Here will I rest!"—and on the plushy floor
I knelt with many others to adore.

IV.

But lo! a vested man who was no priest
A sacramental cup bore to and fro:
And unto that which was no wedding feast,
With folded hands, I saw the people go;
And round the altar-railing knelt and fed
On that which was not the Angelic Bread.

V.

Oh! then I rose up trembling and in tears,
My heart with pity melting in my breast!
So fair a fraud, a counterfeit so rare
Might well bewilder and betray the best.

Phantoms of statue, sacrament, and shrine—
Blank shadows of a substance all divine!

VI.

"*Domine Jesu!*" sang the children's choir,
"*O Bone Pastor!*" sang they overhead:
The tender invocation, rising higher,
Followed me thro' the portals as I fled;
Till up the twilight streets I seemed to hear
The answer stealing musical and clear:

VII.

"*And other sheep I have—not of this fold:*
Them also must I bring, that there may be
One Fold and one True Shepherd,"—Dearest Lord!
Make haste and draw these lost ones speedily;
Lest, having been so near and yet so far,
Their doom reveal how stern Thy judgments are.

THE THANKSGIVING OF THE CHASTENED.

I.

FOR the pain, as well as the pleasure,
For the woe, as well as the weal;
For the loss of the dearest treasure,
And the wound no balm can heal;
For the bloom, and the blight that kill'd it,
Scant sun, and the shadow broad—
Since Thy love hath, in wisdom, willed it—
We thank Thee, Lord, our God!

II.

For the tears that the heart-strings rusted,
For the gold half-dimm'd with dross;
For the change in the friend long trusted,
For the scourge, the thorns, and the cross;

Because they have shown us clearer
The path Thy feet once trod;
Have drawn us nearer and nearer
To Thee—we thank Thee, God!

III.

For the sad mistake that was blameless
For the sinless dark disgrace,
For the sorrow, hidden and nameless,
That won us Thy close embrace!
For the dead, as well as the living,
For the stricken under the rod—
With a joy, not of earth's thanksgiving,
We thank Thee, Lord, our God!

CHRISTMAS IDYL.

'TIS Christmas Eve, and my heart must go
Over to Bethlehem, thro' the snow,
Its flight with the angels winging;
Along the slopes where the shepherds lie,
The starlight falls from the dark, blue sky,
And I hear the sheep-bells ringing.

The fleecy clouds are folded like sheep,
On their azure meadows, fast asleep,
In a slumber pure and tender;
While the shepherdess Moon, with a pensive look,
Touches their wool with her silver crook,
And tips their horns with splendor.

Low on the wold, the drifts lie deep,
Like other beautiful, snow-white sheep,
Too chill for "baa"-ing or bleating;
And the trees, like shepherds with hoary heads,
Bend over the lambkins, in their beds,
A lullaby soft repeating.

O sheep of the clouds! O sheep of the wold!
O living, bleating sheep of the fold!
Come over the hills with a stranger!
Come, shepherds, and guide these affections of mine,
With the rest of your flock, to the Lamb Divine!
—His glittering tears on their fleece may shine,
But He'll fold *my* sheep in His manger!

THE SPARROW'S SERMON.

A HEAVY cross was mine, one cruel day,
A disappointment sore, a giving way
Of all the golden props whereon, secure,
My heart had leaned, and thought its trust most sure.

Into a convent-garden strayed my feet,—
A rustic chair in that serene retreat
Yielding me rest; the sunshine lay around,
A hissing fountain broke the hush profound,
And, 'neath the blossoms of the woodbine sweet,
I sat me down amid the flow'rs and birds,
And mused and mused, in grief too deep for words.

Before me, on a mound of em'rald moss,
A Calvary was raised; (the precious tryst
Of many a virgin heart), for, from the cross,
A pure, colossal image of the Christ

Looked sadly down: the wounded Hands spread
wide,
And a great fissure in the blesséd Side.

Across the piercéd Feet, the sunbeams fair
Fell, like the threads of Magdalen's bright hair;
And, like her tears, the fountain's flashing spray
Upon those sacred members, sparkling, lay.
The while, with dreaming eyes, I noted how
The rosy radiance bathed the royal Brow,—
Sharp thro' the silence, near my nook, I heard
The piercing outcries of a suff'ring bird,
And (just beyond the maple's silver bough)
Behold! a hand in wantonness or wrath,
From out the crevice of a neighboring wall,
Had hurl'd a sparrow's nest,—the cruel fall
Crushing the speckled eggs upon the path.

Around about her broken treasures flew
The little mother,—ah! too well I knew
The bitter anguish of her feathered breast.
"Unhappy me!" I moaned, with heart oppress'd,
"I, also, mourn, like thee, a ruined nest;—
What shall we do, poor bird, what shall we do?"

But, even as I spake, (to my surprise),
The little creature ceased its piteous cries;
With russet head upturn'd, bright eye askance,
Surveyed the ruin of its life's romance:
Stretch'd out its glossy beak, and bravely tried
To touch the hopeless wreck on ev'ry side,—
Then, stroked its ruffled plumes, and taking heart,
Began to tear the shattered nest apart.

Fragments of straw, dried leaves, and fragrant grass,
Feathers and wool, a dusky, downy mass,
Remorseless rent, lay scattered on the ground:—
When lo! the sparrow with the soft débris,
Spreading its pinions (smooth as polish'd glass),
Flew to the green, exalted Calvary,
Flew to the Christ, with rosy splendors crown'd,
And, in *His* open Side, a refuge found!

There, with a twitt'ring song of tend'rest rest.
The tiny bird began to build her nest;

While, on my knees, with streaming tears, I cried:
"Sweet sparrow! sheltered in a Saviour's breast,
Thanks for thy gentle lesson!
Wounded pride
May brood above the failures of its past,
And make its sullen moan; but Hope divine
Springs from the wreck of joys, too frail to last,
To seek on Calvary its changeless shrine;
And from the ruins of Time's shattered nest,
Builds in the Heart of Christ a refuge blest!"

SAN BONIFAZIO.

An Unknown Martyr.

(Under the Altar of a Philadelphia Church.)

CLEAR thro' the old church-shadows, the lamp of the altar glows,
The echo of feet departing is hush'd in a deep repose.

And the smell of the fragrant incense still lingers, full of heaven,
To tell that the Benediction was here at twilight given.

Close to the altar-railing, steep'd in the odor sweet,
I feast mine eyes on the martyr who lies at his Master's feet.

The Roman soldier-martyr, San Bonifazio,
Who gave his life for Jesus a thousand years ago.

A fair recumbent figure, a lovely blooming face,
Stretch'd on a couch of satin, in grave repose-
ful grace,

The rich and shining raiment is brilliant to be
seen
Whene'er the lamp's soft lustre silvers the crystal
screen.

Methinks the sparkling armor, the sleeping lovelі-
ness
Of that fair silent figure, withal, allure me less

Than the green of the sacred palm-branch where
martyr-fingers meet,
And the gleam of the glass ampulla beside the
sandal'd feet.

For unto the victor only belongs the victor's
palm,
And, after the fight, the soldier may rest in slum-
ber calm;

And dark and red on the vial, for centuries congealed,
I see the blood of the martyr most wondrously revealed.

I ask myself in the twilight, "O martyr head! at rest,
What were the thoughts and fancies which once thy brain possess'd?

"What were the loves and likings, O heart of martyr mine!
That thrill'd thy bounding pulses when life and love were thine?

"And wert thou young or agéd? Wert prosperous or poor?
A neophyte in manhood? or in thy childhood pure?

"And had'st thou many kindred, a mother and a home
When thy blest bones were gathered into the Catacomb?"

No answer to my queries: but, from the wounded
throat,
A thin, aerial whisper above me seems to float:

"The cycles melt, like vapor, before the Eternal
Truth,—
What matter want or riches? What matter
age or youth?

"What matter home or kindred to him whom God
suffic'd?
One glory hath the Christian,—to live and die for
Christ!"

THE CHINESE LILY—A SYMBOL.

I.

(A Month ago.)

AN ivory table, carved and chaste,
Whereon a jewel'd hand hath plac'd
A brazen bowl, with pebbles filled,
Brimming with water thrice distill'd,
Where floats a bulb, unsightly, brown,
Brought from a far-off Chinese town.

The wintry twilight clouds the room,
And, on her couch, amid the gloom,
A small, distorted figure lies
Beside the fire. With dreaming eyes,
Watching the bulb, she murmurs low:
"Dear Master, bid Thy lily blow!"

II.

(*To-day.*)

The room is rosed with vernal light.
Like lances stack'd by fairy knight,
The serried blades of living green
Rise from the blub in brilliance keen,
Each emerald glory lifting up
A lily shrining a golden cup!

The couch stands vacant near the door,
The little dwarf dreams there no more!
Out of suff'ring's stony bed,
Out of the tears in patience shed,
Her bulb of warpéd life hath given
The gold of its lily-bloom to Heaven!

DOING THE WILL OF GOD.

WHAT are ye doing, ye bright-wing'd birds,
Out in the world of sun-touch'd trees,
Winging, and singing your songs without words,
Trilling your full-throated melodies?
Sweet is the answering roundelay:
"We are doing the Will of God!" sing they.

And what are ye doing, sweet flowers a-bloom,
In garden and mead, in wood and vale?
Brilliant with beauty, rich with perfume,
What are ye doing on hill and dale?
The blossoms tremble their petals gay:
"We are doing the Will of God!" breathe they.

And ye, O rivers, that run to the sea,
Flashing your waters in shade or sun,
Streamlet and brooklet from over the lea,
What are ye doing the while ye run?

Bright and swift, as they win their way:
"We are doing the Will of God!" cry they.

Brave winds, that wander far and near,
Like errant knights careering by,
Blowing your trumpets, high and clear,
Or crooning soft as a baby's sigh;
What are ye doing by night and day?
"Doing the Will of God!" laugh they.

Once more—O stars in the azure sky,
O moon, arrayed in your silver sheen!
Majestic sun, enthroned on high,
Flooding with light all things terrene,—
What are ye doing? Tell me, pray,—
"Doing the Will of God!" chant they.

Then, to my soul in its selfish dreams,
I thunder: "List to the birds and flowers!
Listen, and learn from the winds and streams,
From the sun, and the moon, and the starry powers,
To follow them all in their high endeavor,
And do the Will of thy God forever."

SAINT ANTONY'S CLIENT.

HOW many times, O sweet Saint Antony!
When precious little things were lost, mislaid,
How many trusting times, I've turned to thee,
And tenderly besought thy potent aid.

And never yet in vain—a glove—a ring—
A book—a *reliquaire*—a rosary—
Each trifling trinket—yea, each treasur'd thing,
Thy gracious care hath given back to me.

Thanks, gentle saint. Ah! yet, once more, extend
Thy loving aid; for I have lost to-day
That treasure of all treasured things—a friend,
Whom some perverse misdoubt hath led astray.

Dearer than book, or ring, or perfum'd glove!
Rarer than rosary or *reliquaire*—
Of all earth's missing things, shall missing love
Alone, alas! be lost beyond repair?

Must malice wound, or misconstruction sour
The sweetest of all spirits to the end?
Ah! no, Saint Antony! exert thy power,
And give, oh! give me back my dear lost friend!

THE FIERY TONGUES.

SAGE hath said: In the first Pentecost
When th' Apostles and Our Mother sweet
Received from Heav'n the promised Paraclete—
Gravely they noted that the Holy Ghost
Came not in shape of fiery quill or pen,
Whereby as scribes unto the sons of men,
The sons of God might write His Gospel. . . Lost
In wondering awe, they see, instead, descend
The Spirit of all Light (their hearts' desire),
Disguised in flaming symbols—Tongues of Fire,
Which, to each head a golden glory lend.
Thus by the Tongue their mission was assign'd:
Go forth and preach the Gospel to mankind,
And teach (not write) its message to the end!

WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW?

DEAR Lord! in some dim future year,
In some dim future month and day,
Abides the hour, the solemn hour,
When Thou shalt call my soul away,
That year, that month, that day of days,
Come soon? come late?—I know not when.
O Thou, who rulest all my ways!
Master of life, whom Death obeys,
Be with me then, be with me then!

Somewhere upon this globe of ours
Is hid the spot where I must die,
Where 'mid the snows, or 'mid the flowers,
My shrouded form shall coffin'd lie.
If north or south? If east or west?
At home? abroad?—I know not where.
O tender Father, Lord of grace!
Whose presence fills the realms of space,
Be with me there, be with me there!

By fire? by flood? by famine sore?
By sudden stroke? by slow decay?—
When Death's dark angel opes my door,
How shall it call my soul away?
God only knows; HE bends the bow,
And He alone can fix the dart.
Yet care I not when, where, or how
The end may come, sweet Lord! if Thou
Wilt then but shield me in Thy Heart!

THE LIFTED HAT.

AT dawn, along a lonely street,
Thro' winds and whirling snow,
Unto his toil, with hurrying feet,
I watched a poor man go.

His thread-bare garments, 'gainst the cold,
Were sad defence, I fear:
But, bravely pressing on—behold!
Our Lady's Church stood near.

And, as he pass'd where Jesus sat
Upon His altar throne,
The poor man raised his rusty hat,
And hailed the Hidden One.

What secret prayer was on his tongue,
What rev'rence in his heart,
(While his rapt soul its incense flung
To Him who dwells apart,)——

No man can say,—God only knows
The prayers conceived or said;—
Few, save the angels, saw him pause
With meek, uncover'd head.

Yet, did his act more faith declare
Than schoolmen's tomes profound;—
A speaking Faith and Love were there,
Tho' lips gave forth no sound;

And heaven's court with splendor blazed,
And angels 'gan to sing,—
When, his torn hat, the poor man raised,
To hail his hidden King!

* * * * * *

O tender Heart of Christ, our Lord!
Perchance, that gesture mute
More glory on Thine altar poured
Than might a King's salute!

Perchance, the guileless piety
Of Thine unlettered poor
Is sweeter, dearer, far to Thee
Than angel's worship pure!

FORGIVING AND FORGETTING.

"I FORGIVE, but I never forget!" she said,
With a frown on her dark, forbidding brow,
When one she had wounded humbly pled
For peace and pardon now.

"'My foes, my footstool!' cried David the king;
'A Christian' (you say) 'forgives the debt!'
Ah! yes, but forgetting's another thing—
I never can forget!"

And then, ignoring the proffer'd hand,
Blind to the love in the wistful eyes,
She went her way to the woful land
That knows no Paradise;

Went her way to the black eclipse
Shadowing all that from Love depart,
The rose of forgiveness on her lips,
The thorns of hate in her heart.

For, after her trod a shadowy Shape—
Thorn-crown'd—cross-laden—wounded sore—
The crimson Blood, like the juice of the grape,
Dropping behind, before!

And ever and aye in her ears shall live
His piercing cry; "What of *thy* debt?
How shalt thou fare if *I* forgive,
Yet never, never forget?"

THE MOTHERLESS HOME.

BEFORE that sad day when the Angel of Death
Swept over our hearth on his pinions of sorrow,
And the mother we prized as the breath of our breath,
Lay lifeless and cold on the morrow;

Before that dark day,—did I wander afar
At Duty's behest, or the promptings of Pleasure?
My heart, like the needle that turns to the star,
Turned ever to Home, as its treasure.

And I wearied of joys, I grew sick of delights,
'Mid scenes new and charming, I pined for another,—
Mine own quiet ingle, where Home's cheery lights
Were the face and the smile of my mother!

But since, from our midst, from the arms of our
love,
The shade of our dearest pass'd outward for-
ever,—
Let me flee where I will (like the wind-beaten
dove),
My heart's never home-sick,——no, never!

Indifferent, tho' weary,—where'er I may roam
(With sighs, that the bravest of wills cannot
smother),
I have learn'd, in Love's language, that *Mother* is
Home,
And *Home* but a weak word for *Mother!*

* * * * * * *

O Friend! as you sit at your desolate hearth,
And gaze thro' your tears at the one vacant
corner,
Whence the shadow of Death seems to spread o'er
the earth
And veil every joy, like a mourner;

In the long, lonesome days that are certain to
come,
Let this comforting balm to your sore heart be
given :
That, if Home is but Mother, and Mother is
Home,
Both Mother and Home are in heaven!

A TAPER AT LOURDES.

DOWN in the Grotto of Lourdes,
Over the wide blue sea,
A taper fine, at our Lady's shrine,
Was lighted and burned for me;

Lighted and burned for me,
By a loved and loving friend,
Whose constant soul no chances control,
No changes or doubts attend.

On the purest feast of our Queen,
A-blaze at her rose-deck'd feet,—
That taper of grace to her beautiful face
Lifted its lustre sweet.

Wasting and waning there,
Running in drops to the ground,—
The incense thick from its sparkling wick,
Scenting the air around,—

Like a star of the night it shone,
  Like a flower of flame it bloomed,
As tho' 'twere a joy without alloy
  To be at *Her* feet consumed.

O beautiful, trembling light!
  O candle aglow in the Grot!
In the midst of the moil of my daily toil,
  My spirit forgets thee not.

And ever across the gloom
  Of the clouds that come and go,
I seem to behold thy flicker of gold,
  And thy wax like sunlit snow.

I bless the bees in their hive,
  That wrought so gracious a comb,
And the myriad flowers of Pyrenese bowers
  Whose honey enticed them to roam.

I bless the friend of my soul
  Whose love remembered me *there*,
Where the Virgin white, with her rosary bright,
  Shineth, a Vision of prayer!

And, taking my heart in my hands,
I offer it up to the Queen;
And cry: "Blest Maid, in glory arrayed,
Behold, my taper terrene!

"Ah! set it aglow with thy love,
Let purity kindle its blaze,
Till here on thy shrine, heart and taper of mine
Be burned and consumed in thy praise!"

THOSE OUTSTRETCHED ARMS.

TOUCHING old tradition sweetly saith
That when the dead Christ 'neath the Cross reposed,
His open Eyes, all glazed and dim with death,
By Mary's tender hand, were meekly closed.

But when the bruised and swollen Arms she strove
To gently fold upon His bleeding breast—
O might and mystery of deathless Love!
She could not close or bend those Members blest!

Covered with wounds, He lay upon her knee,
His blesséd mangled Hands spread wide apart,
As though to say: "Poor sinners! come to Me,
And, even yet, I'll clasp you to My Heart!"

As though to say: "O suff'ring saints, who yearn
To hide your sorrows in a faithful breast,
Come, cast yourselves into these Arms, and learn
That in *My* Bosom ye may safely rest!"

Dear Arms, where thus, both saint and sinner find
Repose from pain, release from sin and woe;—
(Within whose sanctuary close-enshrined
The coldest heart with rapturous love must glow;)

Dear outstretched Arms! so full of mute appeal,
Tho' oft I've spurned your fond embrace of yore,
Ah! let me now unto your shelter steal,
And nestle there, sweet Love! forever more!

THE HERMIT'S VISION.

HE saw the land before him, dark'ning, lie,
Spread with unnumbered snares and pit-
falls deep.—
Gazing with fixed and slow-distending eye,
(As one who wakes from nightmare in his
sleep,)
"O, who," he cried, "shall be of safety sure?
Who, 'mid these many toils, shall pass secure?"

Around, about, and midways, unaware,
And yet aware, (their passions for their guide),—
Like game entrapp'd, or birds in fowler's snare,
The souls of men were caught. The hermit
sighed:
"O, Christ, my Saviour, who shall 'scape the lure?
Who, 'mid these wiles, shall pass to Thee, secure?"

Clear from the heavens (in whose azure arc,
The stars, like jewels, glowed), the answer fell;
O'er ambush'd land, and pitfalls deep and dark,
The message rang, like some blest golden bell:
"Lowly of heart, and of a spirit poor,
Humility alone can pass secure!"

CHRIST'S DOVES.

(On seeing a Community of Nuns enter their Chapel for prayer.)

I.

OVER the sea, in Venice fair,
At the old Cathedral of St Mark,
When the silvery chimes on the noon-tide air,
Float o'er the waters cool and dark—
From airy turret, from spire and dome,
(A murmuring throng at the portal grand),
The doves of St. Mark in legions come
To be fed, each day, by a loving hand.

II.

Why do I dream of the doves this hour?
A fluttering sound, as of wings, I hear;
The bell hath chimed in the convent tower,
The nuns at the chapel door appear.

Slender figures in raiment dark,
(Flowing wimple and snowy band):
The doves of Christ, like the doves of St. Mark,
Have come to feed from a loving Hand!

III.

Murmuring low the whispered words
Of a tender prayer, the virgins kneel;
Lo! like the meek Venetian birds,
They gather here for their mystic meal;
And the Master keepeth the noonday tryst,
And manna sweet from His golden ark
Abundant giveth,—O doves of Christ!
Ye are better fed than the doves of St. Mark!

THE QUEEN AND THE KINGS.

I.

TINKLING bells and camels brave,
Spices, gold, and precious stones,
Glittering train of dusky slaves,
Silken-clad, with jewel'd zones;

From Arabia Felix rare,
(Honey-breath'd and bright of sun),
Comes the Queen of Saba fair
To the ancient Solomon.

II.

Camels brave and tinkling bells,
Myrrh, and frankincense, and gold;
Lo! the sparkling cortège swells
With the dark-skinn'd slaves of old!

Epha, Madian, Saba sweet,
Send their Kings. O Queen, long gone!
Greet they at the CHRIST-CHILD'S feet,
Greater King than Solomon!

THE GRAVES OF CHILDREN.

I.

HEN in the west hangs low
The autumn sun,
And gentle breezes blow
Among the trees, till slow
Fall, one by one,
The withered leaves and brown,—
It is a quiet fancy then to wander
Into the little village churchyard yonder,
And there to sit me down.

II.

It is a pleasant place
Of peace and prayer;
And with a rev'rent pace
And thoughtful grace,
Grief covers up her face
In silence there;

Fierce wail and bitter moan,
Above these couches, mossy in their chillness,
Waver and die,—and in the placid stillness,
God's patience walks alone.

III.

Here do the aged lie,
Like garnered grain,
Beneath the quiet sky,
With darkly-shadowed eye
And dreamless brain,
Pale hands and pulseless breast.
After the years of life, (a weary number,)
God to their tired frames hath given slumber,
And everlasting rest.

IV.

Not there I care to go.
Nor pause to weep;
But where I know
There falls the purest snow,

And wild vines creep,
O'er little ones asleep
In peace below.
'Tis *there* the quiet woos
To steal apart from all the world's rude bustle,
And in this solitude, where dead leaves rustle,
To linger long and muse.

V.

Muse on the blessed lot
Which gathered here
On flower-sprinkl'd bier,
(Earth's sorrow knowing not),
Into this sacred spot,
And silence drear,
These little tender lambs—
With tiny frames unused to life's fierce wrestling
And folded hands with fairy blossoms nestling
Within the snowy palms.

VI.

Soft is their endless rest;
Above them now
There come no visions blest
Of floating hair caress'd,
Or aching brow
On Mother's bosom press'd.
There lie neglected toys,
By many a hearth—but tiny form and finger
In twilight memories of loved ones linger,
Like buried household joys!

VII.

O angel hands! which hold
Death's bitter draught,—
We grieve not when by old
And weary lips a-cold,
Your cup is quaffed;
But when its droplets shine
On blushing lips of those in childhood taken,
O God! how hope and loving faith are shaken
By that dread blow of Thine!

VIII.

To find amid the dead
A mossy nest,
Wherein must rest
The little pet whose head
Was in the twilight laid;
Upon thy breast;
Whose dreamy eyes were raised
And searching thine, while soft reply was given
Unto the earnest question of that Heaven,
Where *now* it stands amazed!

IX.

'Tis hard,—and yet we know
We should not mourn
When children pure as snow,
(The loved of long ago),
Are to the churchyard slow
And sadly borne;
(Life's fairest buds but blow
To deck the urn;)

And dying early thus,
They have been spared the bitter, biting sorrow
Which sad to-day, or sadder still to-morrow
Shall ever bring to us.

X.

Here in their slumber they
May rest as sweet
As when from eager play,
They, tired, turned away,
And at their mother's feet
Reposeful lay;
With pretty shining hair
Thrown back to wave upon the fair young shoulder,
And thought-touch'd brow, which ne'er might know the older
And deeper lines of care.

XI.

Peace to their rest beneath
The rustling trees!
As falls the leaf,
Or blossom from the wreath,

As sword flashed from its sheath,
The lot of these
Hath brilliant been, but brief;
And though we weep,—
Room, angels, room within yon happy Heaven,
And rare rejoicing that our God hath given
His little children sleep!

"AS THE HEN GATHERETH HER CHICKENS."

IN her wicker nest by the old barn-door,
The hen in the sunlight broods,
Shielding a dozen chickens or more,
In fondest of mother-moods.

Some, in the amber fringe at her neck,
Some, in the down of her breast;
While others under her pinions peck,
The warm plumes hiding the rest.

O lovely, fluffy, feather'd things!
Wee brown and golden birds!
As ye nestle under your mother's wings,
I think of the blesséd words,

The words that came, like the wail of death,
From a Heart Divinely true:
"*As the hen her chickens gathereth,*
So had I gather'd you,—

But ye would not—!" . . . Master! never again
Shall Thy Love lament its plea—
As the birds cling close to yon brooding hen,
So cling we close to Thee!

FLOWERS OF THE NIGHT.

MARVELOUS tree is the Sorrowful Tree,
The growth of a bosky defile,
Away, far away, near the coast of Bombay,
On Goa's luxuriant isle.

Whilst the forest is bright with the sun's golden light,
On its boughs not a blossom appears;
But when day sinks to rest in the rose-tinted west,
And the night-dews fall softly, like tears,—

Thro' the long night of gloom, in their tropical bloom,
From the emerald branches outshine
Rich masses of flowers whose petals, in showers,
Fall ruddy and fragrant as wine.

Behold! at the dawn, ev'ry blossom is gone,—
No sunbeam those buds may illume;
Yet, all the year through, in the dusk and the dew,
The Sorrowful Tree is in bloom.

O comforting thought! when the bosom is fraught
With some inexpressible woe,
When the sunlight is gone, and the night draweth on,
And Hope hath no blossoms to show;

Thro' the dew of our tears, like a vision, appears
The night-blooming tree of the East,
In the darkest of hours displaying its flowers,
A mourner arrayed for the feast.

Ah! the breath of delight from those buds of the night,
Shall Affliction's dark forest perfume;
And all the year round, by their radiance crown'd,
The tree of our sorrows shall bloom!

THE DEATH OF THE LILY.

I.

THE lily died last night!
I heard a whisper tremble from the mere,
I marked the crescent of the rounding year,
Pale from the mellow lustre of its light.
I saw the lily dead:
Her floating bier of reeds and woven grass;
Her shroud a moonbeam, and her requiem Mass
The hollow music from the willows shed.

II.

While all the rushy things
That grow and green beside a summer mere,
Wailed thro' the glamour of the atmosphere
An anthem, as on airy cither-strings—
The lily slowly rocked
In the dim light upon the grassy pool,
Fragile and pure, funereal and cool,
Her waxen lids in deadly slumber lock'd.

III.

Oh, grieving heart of mine!
(I said, with tears), Oh, friends that mourn
with me!
The legend of the soul's lost purity
Is written in the lily's swift decline.
Take ye the idle pen,
And let me weep until the purple dawn;
A something pure from out *my* life has gone,
And it can never, never come again!

MORNING-GLORIES.

OVER the trellis, up to the eaves,
The vine's strong tendrils creep:
Out of the glistening, heart-shaped leaves
The morning-glories peep.

Tiny chalices, purple, pink,
And clear, translucent white,—
Into their depths the dewdrops sink,
Warm with the autumn light.

And round the vine, (with the fair sunshine
A-glow on its heart-shaped leaves),
Some tender dreams of the Heart Divine,
My reverent fancy weaves.

The purple chalices seem a type
Of the Sorrows of that Heart;
The radiant pink of the blossoms ripe,
Of Its Glories seem a part.

And the silvery grail yon spray lifts up,
All stainless, seems to be
A type of the Eucharistic cup
And the Host's white purity!

O heart-shaped leaves! ye may decay,
Ye flow'rets, withered lie,—
But the Heart ye image lives for aye,
Its Glories never die!

A SUNSET SYMBOL.

BEYOND yon screen of spectral trees,
The rosy Sunset Land arises;
Its opal gates swing in the breeze,
Its paths are rich with glad surprises.

The ruddy glow above the blue,
Is like a torch, rose-red and tender;—
Each crystal pane it sparkles through,
And fills my chamber with its splendor!

O Sunset Land, so close at hand,
Thine open portals twined with roses,—
The Sacred Heart's dominions grand,
In thee, I hail, as twilight closes!

What time, methinks, the Precious Blood
Dyes crimson all thine airy vapors,
Thy quiv'ring flames—a fiery flood—
Blaze forth, as from a thousand tapers.

And when thine inner cloudlets part,
I see within their glowing centre,
A thorn-encircled, cross-crown'd Heart,
Inviting all Its depths to enter!

Fling wide Thy gates, O Heart Divine,
So full of tenderness and pity!
Within this Sunset Land of Thine,
Reveal to me Thy Golden City!

Receive me to those depths so dear,
Ere Death's dim twilight round me closes,
There to repose, devoid of fear,
Love's victim, crowned with deathless roses!

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

VISION of peace—Jerusalem!
How gently to the heart's unrest,
Those words, like angel-accents, seem
Thy glories to suggest!

A holy calm is on thy streets,
The river floweth noiselessly;
And tranquil float through fair retreats
A gracious company.

For, tho' they sing and strike their lyres,
A hush is on each happy sense;
The brightest flame of their desires
Burns quiet, if intense.

And all their song is full of peace,
And all their peace is full of God—
The soul's eternal sin-release,
A rapture deep and broad.

The wearing fret, the hurrying rush
Of earth, stir not that life of love,
For over all a sacred hush
Broods, like a nestling dove.

Nor doubt, nor fear, (nor shattered hopes,
That scourged the soul to Death's abyss,)
Are there; they form but golden ropes
Whereby it mounts to bliss!

O peaceful Home! how deep, how strong
Our yearning for thy mansions cool!
How long, my fevered heart, how long,
Must strife and discord rule?

How long, ere sorrow, care and pain,
Jerusalem! in thee shall cease?
Hasten the coming of thy reign,
Vision of endless Peace!

ABANDONED.

Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away.
(St. Mark, xiv, 50.)

THY seamless robe is redder than the rose,
Thy beauteous Face is blanch'd with agony;
The brutal soldiery around Thee close,
While, left and right, the poor disciples flee.

'Mid howling wolves (meek Lamb!) Thou stand'st alone,
Thy bosom heaves; Thy tears, unheeded, start;
Tho' cruel hands assault Thee, hard as stone,
It is not *they*, alas! that wound Thy Heart!

The ring of coin still echoes in Thine ears,
(Whereby betrayed Thee the Iscariot,)—
And outrag'd Love now shudders, as it hears
The cherished Simon's loud "I know Him not!"

Ingratitude hath dealt its deadliest blow ;—
O faithful Heart ! forsaken at the end,
Far better are the insults of a foe,
Than the false kisses of a treach'rous friend !

Lo ! to Thy feet we bring (with souls oppress'd),
Our wreck of broken joys, of hopes o'er-thrown ;
The secret, silent anguish of a breast
Which claps its cross, abandon'd and alone.

When friends prove false, and loving hearts grow cold,
O constant Friend ! true Love ! we turn to Thee,
And to Thy dear, deserted Heart make bold
To breathe our plaint of lonely misery.

And oh ! the while we tenderly unite
Our tiny sorrows to Thy mighty woes,—
How sweet to find (tho' all earth's joys take flight,)
In Thee, alone, firm peace and fix'd repose !

A PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER.

RUSTY shield prayed to the sun:
"O Sun! illuminate my face
With the glad glory of thy rays,
That I may shine, resplendent one!
As once I shone in ancient days!"
Replied the sun:
"First cleanse thyself from rust—and then
My Face in thee shall shine again!"

A guilty soul prayed to its Lord:
"O Christ! illuminate my face,
And let Thy lustrous flood of grace
Upon my darkened eyes be pour'd!
Their radiant vision once restored,
Thy glory shall the gloom displace!"
Replied the Lord:
"First cleanse thyself from sin—and then
My Face in thee shall shine again!"

THE BRIDGE OF LIFE.

YON line of light across the sea,
That 'twixt the em'rald shadows lies,
A bridge of silver seems to be,
Let down from rifts in cloudy skies.

Outstretching to the crystal rim,
Where meet and part the sails of snow,
It sparkles through the distance dim,
A pier where angels come and go.

Ah! thus, my soul, across Life's sea,
'Mid dark'ning shades of grief and care,
Outstretches to Eternity
The pure, resplendent Bridge of Prayer.

Time's airy ships advance, retreat—
This firm bridge leadeth to the skies—
For, following fast on angels' feet,
We pass from Prayer to Paradise!

THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

I OPENED the Blessed Book
In the hush of a sylvan spot,
And I read: "Whoever followth Me,
In darkness walketh not."

Cried my soul: "When shadows flee,
O Lover, more than friend!
In the glow of the light I will follow Thee,
Rejoicing to the end!"

But a wind the woodland fann'd,
And the leaves of the forest shook,
Turning, as if with a viewless hand,
The leaves of that precious Book.

And lo! on another page,
I read again, with a sigh:
"If any man will come after Me,
Let him, himself, deny.

"Let him, himself, deny"—it said,
(And I trembled shudderingly)—
"And take up his cross"—it sternly read,
"And follow, follow Me!"

O truth of truths! On the moss,
I knelt in the greenwood lone,
And pondered the secret of the Cross,
In the living Word made known.

Who wills to walk in the light
That flows from a Source divine,
Lord! in the path to Calv'ry's height,
Must plant his steps in Thine!

For none that path can tread,
Can walk that royal road,
Save those that suffer, toil, and sweat,
And carry the cross of God!

The way is narrow and rough,
Sharp stones the footpath strew,
And after the bleeding, burden'd Christ,
The suff'ring Christians go.

But a glow and a glory bright
On those pilgrims ever beam;
For the way of the Cross is the way of light,
Of light and love supreme!

THE APOSTLE WHO PROVED.

BSENT when came the Risen Christ to cheer
The trembling Ten, SAINT THOMAS by his doubt,
The Resurrection proved, and every fear
By his bold testimony, put to rout.

Absent, when Mary died, and was interr'd—
Beside her tomb, it was to Thomas given,
To view its lilied void. It was his word
That proved our Queen's Assumption into heaven!

THE DRAMA SPIRITUALIZED.

Read by request before the Convention in the Women's Building of the Cotton States and International Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia, November 26, 1895.

HEY tell in ancient mythologic story
Of young Eurydice, once beauteous bride
Of Orpheus, the prince of lyric glory,
(The bard by pagans to the gods allied)—

Fated Eurydice! from out the chaos
Of Grecian lore, we see her rise and flee
Across the meads, pursued by Aristaeus,
Inflamed with Bacchanalian revelry!

Lo! as with wind-blown robes, in flight she passes—
(Hearing afar her spouse's silv'ry flute)—
A jeweled serpent darting from the grasses
Stings unto death her slender, roseate foot!

And down she sinks into the gloomy region
Where Pluto holds his court, and Proserpine
Ringed by the Harpies and the Fates, (foul legion!)
Reigneth a queen, infernally divine!

What time Eurydice in mortal sorrow
Doth languish in that place of torturing shame,
Her spouse—her Orpheus, the fatal morrow,
Comes seeking her within the realms of flame.

He sees the Parcæ with wild eyes a-kindle,
He sees the serpent-crown'd Eumenides:
The first display the Distaff, Shears and Spindle,
The latter guard the Trident and the Keys.

Pressing his way to Pluto's throne of fire,
(Past the dog Cerberus and the streams that burn),
The mighty minstrel strikes his golden lyre,
And singing, pleads for his lost bride's return.

O matchless music! Pluto's heart dissolving,
Acknowledges the singer's magic sway;
The wheel of Ixion is no more revolving—
The stone of Sisyphus is stilled to-day!

And wretched Tantalus, his thirst forgetting,
Listens entranced to that rare melody;
The Furies hear, while tears their eyes are wetting:
"Oh, give me back my lost Eurydice!"

"She shall be thine!" Pluto at last replieth;
"Thy song hath conquered e'en our cruel spell.
Take her—but *look not back!* The mortal dieth
Who turns one backward glance on us and hell!"

Oh, joy! the lost one to her lover rushes!
They clasp—they weep—they sob aloud their bliss!
Already doth the sun illume her blushes,
The winds of heav'n her shining tresses kiss!

When "Hasten, love!"—her happy spouse exclaiming,
Turns with a backward glance to speed her flight—
Alas! alas! the pit of Pluto flaming
Hath swallowed her forever from his sight!

* * * * * * * * *

My gentle friends, methinks you are well able
To solve this riddle of antiquity,
To read the moral of this Grecian fable
Of hapless, lovely, lost Eurydice.

Behold! the drama in its chaste transcendence,
The glory of its pristine loveliness,
Pursued, in all its classical resplendence,
By lustful suitors to hell's dread abyss!

From out the green of treacherous morasses,
See, where the serpent of a Sensual art
Springs on the trembling Genius as she passes,
And wounds her to the death with poison'd dart!

Alas! she sinks,—down—down she sinks despairing
Into the dark domain of sin and hell,
The stigma of the Damned forever sharing,
Eternal slave of Death's black citadel!

Corruption hath assailed her incorruption,
The Sensual her spirit hath defiled,
For Art lascivious hath wrought destruction
Upon the Drama's pure and lovely child.

Oh! who shall free the captive from her fetters?
Who lead her, radiant, from hell's gloomy door?
Who shall release her from that den of debtors,
And lift her to a higher life once more?

When shall there come some selfless, brave reformer
Far better, wiser than Apollo's son,
(Whose music dies in meanest, tuneless murmur
Before the measures of this mighty one!)

To cleanse the age in its polluted fountains,
To tame the savage beasts of Passions wild,
Uproot Impurity's gigantic mountains,
And flood the stage with beauty undefiled?

All this must be the work of some grand creature
In true, regen'rate Art's Millennium,
When Grace shall rule triumphant over Nature,
And heav'nly cohorts smite the demons dumb!

Arise, O Christian Orpheus! bring hither
Thy golden lyre filled with heaven's song!
Make music with the viol and the zither
That shall beguile the cruel and the strong!

Sing, till the very courts of Satan tremble,
Till Fate and Fury, melting, yield to thee!
Cry where the princes of the Dead assemble:
"Oh, give us back our Drama's purity!"

And when she comes, the Genius fair and gifted,
In all her blushing beauty's smiles and tears,
When to thy bosom she is, rapturous, lifted,
And borne aloft to higher, purer spheres—

O Christian Orpheus! *look not back, I pray thee,*
Let not thy glances seek a sensual past;
No lure should tempt—no obstacle delay thee
From speeding to thine eyrie, free and fast!

Onward and upward! Death and hell behind thee
May clamor for their prey. Albeit baptized
With fire, thou shalt fear naught—no chain shall bind thee,
No hounding demon ever track or find thee;—
Heav'n's victor thou shalt be, since 'tis assigned thee,
To hail the Drama pure and spiritualized!

SYMPATHY.

GOLDEN oil upon Life's creaking wheels,
Bidding the noisy cycles soundless turn;
Love's unguent on each smarting seam and burn,
Blessing the wounds its gracious balsam heals;
A perfect strain of harmony which steals
Into the jarring discords of our earth,
'Till ev'ry soul its soothing sweetness feels,
And melancholy brightens into mirth.

Sans sympathy—a man can never prove
A true apostle of the One whose tread
Broke not the bruiséd reed, nor (in His love)
The smoking flax crush'd or extinguishéd.
He who would image Christ must ever be
Filled with a Christlike genial sympathy.

THE ACADIANS IN PHILADELPHIA.

"Those of the Acadians (or French Neutrals) who came to Philadelphia were provided with quarters in a long range of one-story wooden houses built on the north side of Pine street, and extending from Fifth to Sixth street."—(Watson's Annals, Vol. I.)

I SIT alone at my window;
The twilight lowers its veil,
And soft thro' the violet shadow,
The stars peep far and pale.

Just over the way, the houses
Melt from sight, like the snow,
And in their stead arises
A vision of long ago;

A dream of the days departed,
When (near the pine trees' belt),
The simple-soul'd, meek-hearted
Acadian exiles dwelt.

Dissolved are bricks and mortar—
The children of Grand-Pré
Fill all that ancient quarter
With huts, long past away!

The low huts of the brethren
Of sweet Evangeline,
Flow'r of the poor French Neutrals,
In meadows still and green!

Near by, the Quaker Almshouse
Stretched long and low and red,
Where Gabriel, the lost one,
Lay dying on his bed,

When thro' its doors, heart-broken,
His sweetheart passed one day,
Leaving her love-dream's golden rose
A heap of ashes gray.

Up yonder square, dear reader,
If wand'ring thoughtfully,
You'll find the little graveyard
Of Holy Trinity;

And there, amid their brethren,
'Tis said, they slumber sweet,*
Evangeline, the faithful,
With Gabriel at her feet.

The moss creeps o'er the marble,
The rank grass wilts or waves;
The wild birds come to warble
Where ivy clothes the graves;

And o'er them floats the singing
Of the old German choir,
The church-bells' mellow ringing
From realms purer, higher.

The busy streets around them
Are full of change and stir;
No sound of strife can reach his life,
And all is peace for *her!*

* * * * * *

* "In their nameless graves, the lovers are sleeping;
Under the humble walls of the little Catholic churchyard,
In the heart of the city they lie."
—LONGFELLOW'S *Evangeline.*

There has been much contention as to the exact spot where the Acadians lie buried.

The Past (outside my window)
The Present blurs and blots;
I see naught in the shadow
Of white Acadian cots,

Save two fair phantom models
Of pure devotedness—
Evangeline Bellefontaine
And Gabriel Lajeunesse!

ASCENSION DAY.

WEARY time was that, to mortals given,
When (all abyssed in misery profound),
Throughout the vast bright courts of beauteous heaven
No human soul was found.

No creature of our race in flesh or spirit
Abode within God's holy Paradise,
No child of earth was suffered to inherit
That kingdom of the skies.

Angels, archangels, thrones and dominations,
Powers and virtues, shining cherubim,
Glad principalities, in jubilation,
Made music with the glowing seraphim;

But in that chorus of exultant sweetness,
While golden harp-strings with delight were stirr'd,
The ear of God perceived an incompleteness,—
No human voice was heard!

At last, there came a Day when all those mansions
Thrilled thro' their rapturous void of Self's alloy,
The jasper walls upon their jewel'd stanchions
Trembled with strangest joy!

For from the outer space, there came a thunder
Of many voices chanting, as in choir,
A psalm so sweet, the angels gazed in wonder,
And hush'd was every lyre.

Wide on their hinges, rolled the pearly portals,
Forth swept the spirits by sweet urgence driven,
Thrice welcome was that band of blessed mortals
Who came to share their heaven!

Foremost and fairest, shone their Captain glorious,
The Risen Christ. He led that shining throng,
That white-robed throng, who bore their palms victorious
And sang their triumph-song!

Out from the Limbo of the buried ages,
They came, those ransomed souls of long ago,
Prophets and patriarchs, saints, heroes, sages,
And virgins chaste as snow.

They came to claim their heritage supernal,
Purchased by Jesus' Blood * * * With rare delight,
To see, where all was peerlessly eternal,
Their flesh uplifted to the Godhead's height!

"Roll back your gates!" they sang: "the night is over,
The long night of our waiting! (Cleansed from sin,)
With Christ, our King of glory, man's best Lover,
We come to reign—oh! let us enter in!

"Ye mighty doors give way, (as clouds auroral
Melt rosy-hued before the rising sun!)
Hail! Land of Rest! Welcome, celestial choral!
The goal of Paradise at last is won!"

THE CHAMBER OF CHRIST.

I.

IN the homes of the early Christians,
(Those shrines of peace and prayer,)
Of all the goodly chambers,
The one beyond compare,—
The fairest and the brightest,
Where Faith and Love held tryst,—
Was the tranquil little chamber
They called the ROOM OF CHRIST.

II.

For there, the brave believers,
Across the threshold pure,
Led in the weary wand'rers,
The sick, the sad, the poor;
And there, the homely banquet
For hungry ones was spread;
And pilgrim limbs were rested
Upon the peaceful bed.

III.

O Faith and Love! that worshipp'd
With fond adoring eyes,
Behind each veil of suff'ring,
Your Lord in lowly guise:—
'Twas JESUS whom ye welcomed,
And wooed to food and rest,
In ev'ry wand'ring pilgrim,
In ev'ry sorrowing guest!

IV.

And thus that hallowed chamber,
(To strangers sacrificed,)
Was known, throughout the mansion,
As the little ROOM OF CHRIST;
And who shall say what blessings
A bounteous heaven pour'd
Upon each happy household
That *there* received its Lord?

V.

Dear Christians, gentle readers,
When ye your homes adorn,

Do ye reserve a chamber
For pilgrim-guests forlorn?
A spot where woes may slumber,
And withered hopes may bloom?—
Ah! then, within *your* households,
Christ hath His favorite Room!

SWEET PEACE.—A PICTURE.

UPON the wall
The autumn light, like golden wine, is pour'd;
Upon the wall
There hangeth high a soldier's belt and sword.

Thro' lattice low,
The winds of Indian summer steal and melt;
And to and fro,
They gently blow the soldier's sword and belt.

Oh, slumb'ring sword!
Swing lightly on the wall; shine bright and blue!
Oh, idle sword!
There's no more bloody work for thee to do.

No more for thee,
Oh, belt content to dangle in the sun!
War, anarchy,
And girded strife for thee are surely done.

For *thee* no more—
Ah! best of all—no more, no more for thee,
Oh, soldier! Sick of war,
Here rest, and take thy baby on thy knee!

Here calmly sit,
And watch the orchards ripen in the sun;
Thy pipe is lit,
And gaily prate thy wife and little one.

Oh! golden Peace!
Oh, happy calm, which follows after storm!
When clamors cease,
How sweet to rest in haven still and warm!

Good sword! the rust
May creep and creep along thy polish'd blade;
And moth-flies must
Make havoc, belt, among thy tinsel'd braid,

But (happy wight!)
Your master tastes the bliss of your release.
——Oh, God of might!
Who blessed our fight, bless now our welcome peace!

THE CHANGES OF THE YEARS.

THERE is naught so sad, (save Sin),
In this sad old world of ours,—
(Where the light is shadow's kin,
And the thorns outlive the flowers);—
There is naught so rends the heart,
Or so melts the soul in tears,
As the pain which forms a part
Of the changes of the years.

Earth and all the things thereof
Find their fate in Death's decree;
Hearts once linked in fondest love
Drift apart, like ships at sea.
Through the roses on the wall,
Lo! the imp of Ruin leers;—
And the fairest fabrics fall
With the changes of the years.

Now, 'tis absence,—now, deceit,—
Now, some foolish words, half-play,—
Yet a friendship strong and sweet
Hath forever passed away.
There are sadder things than death
In the vision of the seers,—
Love's a dream, and Joy's a breath
In the changes of the years.

In the fane, and at the feast,
There is many a stranger-guest:
At the shrine, a stranger-priest
Offers up the Victim blest;
While the vacant seats are filled,—
We must mount to purer spheres,
If we seek the balm distilled
From the changes of the years.

One by one, the dear ones go,—
One by one, old friends depart,—
Strangely still old homesteads grow;
Death is busy with his dart.

Like a ghost beside the hearth,
Mocking Memory appears,—
Ah! there's naught so sad on earth
As the changes of the years!

Here, we miss a friendly face,—
There, a form we prized hath fled:
Beams no more a tender grace
From beloved eyes long-dead.
Marriage-bells ring funeral-chimes,
Bridal beds have turned to biers,—
Thro' all places,—thro' all times,
Roll the changes of the years.

Ah! the heart grows faint with dread,
Ah! the eyes grow dim with woe;
O'er unnumber'd tombs we tread,
Stumbling blindly on below;
Tracking ever thro' the dark
Some lov'd shape which disappears,—
Leaving naught, save grief to mark
The sad changes of the years.

O Thou fair and faithful One!
Ever old, yet ever new,—
O Thou Father, Spirit, Son!
Who, alone, art firm and true:
Thou hast nothing sad or strange
That can freeze our hopes to fears,—
Thou dost alter not nor change
With the changes of the years.

Then, to Thee, my God! I'll cling,—
On Thy Rock my soul is stayed;
'Neath the shadow of Thy wing,
I shall nestle undismayed:
Hold me fast thro' Death's dark night,
Till Thy day-star bright appears,—
Lo! Eternity shall right
All the changes of the years!

GONE!

A Carol for New Year's Eve.

I.

TOLL, bells, within your airy heights; wail, winds, o'er moor and mere,
On this, the saddest of all nights, the last night of the year;
The last, long night when lamps are lit, like tapers 'round a bier,
When quiet folk at still hearths sit, and God seems very near.

II.

Tho' vainly o'er his nameless woes, full many a mortal weeps,
Tho' folded in the silent snows, full many a darling sleeps;
Tho' pleasant eyes that saw it come, can never see it go,
Still, kindly hath this Old Year done its mission here below.

III.

For ev'ry cloud within its breast, a golden sunbeam bore,
And ev'ry joy was doubly bless'd by sorrows gone before;
And ev'ry sinless soul that laid mortality aside,—
Departing, left us in its stead an angel holy-eyed!

IV.

And on this last night of the year, this quiet, dreamy night,
The angel-messengers are here, a goodly, gracious sight!
With white robes shining thro' the gloom, with fair, immortal faces,
They flit around the home-like room, and fill familiar places.

V.

Their hands are felt, where other hands were felt in days before,
Their heads are laid where other heads shall never nestle more!

Their rustling footsteps seem to mock the patt'ring
feet, now clay,
And mingling with the ticking clock, their voices
breathe alway

VI.

Of myriad blessings to be born within the com-
ing year;
Of love and peace for those that mourn, and hope
for those that fear;
Of darksome records cleansed for aye, from sorrow
and from sin,
Of good seed sown, and (in their day), rich har-
vests gathered in.

VII.

Of ships that shall go down to sea, and leave a
shining track,
And after cruising merrily, shall bring their
treasures back;
And of those ships of rarer sort, Man's noblest
argosy,
Which back shall bring to safest port, the wealth
of Faith's fair Sea!

VIII.

—The old clock strikes upon the stair; Time's
tide is at the turn;
And here, and there, and everywhere, the New
Year tapers burn.
The mimes and masquers fill the street; the bells
clang o'er the river;
The horns are blown,—the drums are beat,—the
Old Year's gone forever!

NOTE. "The conversion of St. Margaret of Cortona," "The Master's Cloak," "The Star of the Kings," and "The Sparrow's Lesson" were first printed in the *Ave Maria;* "A Sunset Symbol" in the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart;* in "*The Birth of the Holly*" in the *Little Pilgrim;* "*Sympathy*" in *Donahoe's Magazine;* and "*The Acadians*" in the *American Catholic Historical Records.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 016 211 838 9